



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB269
Relating to the Budget of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

January 28, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Room 224

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

Mahalo for setting SB269, which is part of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA's) 2025 Legislative Package, for public hearing. OHA submits this testimony in **SUPPORT of SB269**, Relating to the Budget of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) is the constitutionally established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians. Haw. Const. Art. XII § 5. Among its statutory duties, OHA is required to (1) serve as principal public agency in the State of Hawai'i responsible for the performance, development and coordination of programs and activities relating to native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; (2) assess the policies and practices of other agencies impacting native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; and (3) conduct advocacy efforts for native Hawaiians and Hawaiians. Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 10-3.

In fulfillment of these duties, OHA is requesting a \$1,858,454 increase in FY26 and \$1,996,208 increase in FY27 in general fund appropriations (reflected in the FY26 and FY27 biennium budget totals of \$4.8M and \$4.9M).

The requested appropriation increases are necessary to adjust for the cost of inflation since 2020 when OHA began implementing its strategic plan [Mana I Maui Ola](#) and to fund 13 new staff positions to accelerate implementation of the plan. The 13-member team will evaluate existing programs and develop new programs and tactics to advance 'oiwi well-being and reduce disparities in health, housing, education and economic development, as set forth in the strategic plan. The team will also partner with state and county agencies to leverage their resources, and ensure effective delivery of services to Native Hawaiian communities across providers through data sharing, program design, and program evaluation. To ensure transparency for elected officials and the public, staff will post dashboard progress reports on our progress in reducing disparities.

OHA is in the process of initiating bold new initiatives to make measurable progress in advancing Native Hawaiian well-being over the remaining 10 years of its strategic plan. We look forward to partnering with our beneficiaries, the legislature, other Native Hawaiian Organizations and state agencies, and private sector partners as we advance this mission.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 6:21:42 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya	Testifying for Wai'anae Coast Community Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

January 26, 2025

Hawaiian Affairs Committee SB269 Relating to the Budget of The Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Aloha Ka Ko,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support to OHA fiscal biennium budget 2025-2027 for OHA's purpose to continue to be able to serve all native hawaiians and programs that support our people.

I also ask that the Legislature to honor the 1978 consitutional mandatea to allocate the full 20% of Public Land Trust revenue to OHA, years of neglect have left this obligation unmet, and it's time to right the wrong for our people.

Mahalo,

Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/25/2025 6:53:50 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth R. Conklin, Ph.D.	Testifying for Center for Hawaiian Sovereignty Studies	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill appropriates moneys to fund the operating expenses of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for the fiscal biennium beginning on 7/1/2025, and ending on 6/30/2027.

According to OHA's Annual Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, on page 15, OHA's total assets were \$971 Million. By now, half a year later, that figure is likely more than A BILLION DOLLARS. No other branch of the State government is allowed to carry forward such a huge amount. Yet here comes OHA, demanding money for its operating expenses like a beggar holding out his tin cup.

Hawaii Free Press on Friday June 24, 2025 reported some information from OHA's check register which it was able to obtain only after demanding access through the Freedom of Information Act. OHA's payroll was \$15.9 Million for its bloated bureaucracy, which was 40.7% of its spending. Any charity spending such a large percentage on payroll would be regarded as a scam.

Every year OHA's bills demanding money try to distinguish between general funds and trust funds. That's a distinction without a difference. Money is fungible. All these funds belong to the State of Hawaii, whether the money is kept in the right trouser pocket or the left pocket.

Please vote NO on this bill. Give the money back to Hawaii's taxpayers, or spend it to help the thousands of truly needy people of all races who are citizens of Hawaii.



January 28, 2025

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
To the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

SB 269 - RELATING TO THE BUDGET OF THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Aloha Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and members of the Committee:

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Club **supports** SB 269 which increases the general fund appropriation to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. This increase in funding will support the implementation of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs strategic plan, that in turn will support greater support for Native Hawaiian community programs and initiatives. In addition, this funding increase will also support new staff positions intended to leverage partnerships between the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and other government agencies and to improve transparency around Office of Hawaiian Affairs' operations.

Founded by Prince Kūhiō in 1918, the Hawaiian Civic Club movement is the oldest Native Hawaiian community-based advocacy movement. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a not-for-profit organization that is a confederation of 60 individual and autonomous Hawaiian Civic Clubs and 3,500 members located across Hawai'i and across the continental United States.

We appreciate your favorable consideration of this bill.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 6:30:06 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hardy Spoehr	Testifying for The Spoehr Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

Aloha. Thank you for the opportunity to support this bill for the operating biennium budget for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). OHA is now getting close of 50 years of operation and has the sophistication and responsibility unlike any other of our state agencies. Sadly, we feel that over the next four years, the ability of OHA to access federal resources will become increasingly difficult given the current federal scene in Washington D.C. It will become OHA's increasing responsibility to assist with preserving and perpetuating the values of our host culture through its insightful programs and projects in our island society. Mahalo

Hardy Spoehr, President, The Spoehr Foundation

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 4:55:11 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jmi Lilinoe Bassett Asam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Jmi Lilinoe Bassett Asam

4211 Waialae Avenue Suite 102

Honolulu Hawaii 96816

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 5:37:12 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael McVay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Iwi prayer fully Call Out for your actions of respect and reverence

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 4:18:39 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johne Constance Colahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Proposal SB369.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 4:53:36 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lu Ann Mahiki Lankford-Faborito	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 5:38:42 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Su Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Su Wong

Kailua, HI

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 5:48:50 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimmer Hosen (Bighorse)	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

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Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 6:20:11 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Ann K Poire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 6:38:55 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylie Borges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kylie and I am a diasporic Kanaka currently residing in San Jose, CA. I'm submitting testimony today *in support of SB269*.

As the Office of Hawaiian Affairs has explained, this bill to approve OHA's budget increase will allow for:

- Multiple new staff positions which will allow OHA to implement their strategic plan (Mana i Maui Ola) and expand its programs to support Lahui.
- Expanded use of **data-based decision-making**. Data is crucial, not only for understanding what's working well in a program, but also for understanding community needs (including those that OHA will address in areas of health, housing, education, and economic development) and adjusting organization/program focus and allocating resources accordingly. *This will ultimately make OHA's work more strategic and effective.*
- By developing--and making public--a dashboard of key/relevant data, OHA will be able to better tell the story of Kanaka Oihi, specifically what the greatest challenges, successes, and opportunities are that they're experiencing. *This will ultimately create greater transparency and improve public trust in OHA's work.*

Please vote yes on SB269.

Mahalo Nui for your time and consideration,

Kylie

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 7:42:54 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keiko Gonzalez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Me ke aloha,

Keiko

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 8:29:39 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of this measure.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 8:43:57 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Simone Kamaunu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 9:30:06 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kristopher mar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a native hawaiian in civil service, I support this bill, one reason to promote interagency collaboration and to see through the public dashboard for accountability and tracking.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 10:49:57 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Amona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

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As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Scott W. Kekama Amona

swamona@gmail.com

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 1:12:00 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the OHA Budget request and the longstanding partnership between the legislature and Office of Hawaiian Affairs to better the conditions of Kānaka ‘Ōiwi and our islands as a whole. Mahalo nui!

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 4:00:34 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sonya H Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs.

As a Native Hawaiian, it is vital that our cultural ways are preserved. We have lost so much already. Although, I was raised on the Mainland, my love for my Hawaiian roots has never diminished. When I visit Hawaii now, the Islands are literally crying out to me. They are exhausted from all the "taking" and desperately need our help.

Please listen to our motherly ancestors and pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Sonya H Davis

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:32:05 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawaiohawaiki Anakalea	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Appropriate moneys to fund the operating expenses of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for the fiscal biennium beginning on 7/1/2025, and ending on 6/30/2027. Let's make this happen.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 6:53:44 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Steavens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Sir/Mam:

Please approve SB268 as written. I am in support the requests made.

Dawn Steavens

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:21:31 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lina Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Lina Park (she/her) - linapark15@gmail.com - (808) 295-1860

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:49:49 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabrielle Igarta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

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As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Gabrielle Igarta

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 8:35:23 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Davielynn Briones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

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As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:10:13 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiare Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

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As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Tiare Smith

Email: Lahela79@yahoo.com

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:45:21 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Bellamy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

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Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:38:49 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristy Lam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

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As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Kristy Lam

kristylam808@yahoo.com

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:48:46 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kasey Tabar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 11:46:09 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Hegger-Nordblom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support 269 SB RELATING TO THE BUDGET OF THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS.

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 12:48:44 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronnie N Inagaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of S.B. No. 269: Office of Hawaiian Affairs Appropriations Act of 2025

Aloha, Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair, Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ronnie Inagaki, and I am writing in strong support of **S.B. No. 269**, the "Office of Hawaiian Affairs Appropriations Act of 2025." This bill provides crucial funding to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) for the fiscal biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The proposed appropriations will directly address the pressing needs of Native Hawaiian communities while supporting critical programs that enhance housing, education, legal services, environmental protection, and economic opportunities for beneficiaries. The provisions outlined in this bill reflect a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of OHA beneficiaries in alignment with the trust responsibilities of the State of Hawaii. I would like to highlight the following key reasons why this bill is vital:

1. Affordable Housing for Native Hawaiians

The bill provides \$600,000 in general and trust funds in FY 2025-2026 and \$625,000 in FY 2026-2027 to support affordable housing initiatives and related infrastructure. Access to affordable housing is a critical issue for Native Hawaiian families, many of whom face economic challenges and displacement. These funds will help ensure the availability of quality, affordable housing, enabling beneficiaries to achieve stability and economic security.

2. Social Services for At-Risk Beneficiaries

With \$515,000 in general and trust funds annually, this bill prioritizes social services, including crisis management, financial assistance, and case management for at-risk individuals. These services are essential for addressing immediate crises and helping beneficiaries stabilize during emergency situations, ensuring the ability to thrive in the long term.

3. Educational Opportunities for Native Hawaiian Students

The allocation of \$715,000 in FY 2025-2026 and \$740,000 in FY 2026-2027 for educational improvement programs will help Native Hawaiian students prepare for post-secondary education and future economic stability. Education is a cornerstone of empowerment, and these funds will ensure that Native Hawaiian youth have access to the tools and resources necessary to succeed academically and professionally.

4. Legal Services to Protect Native Hawaiian Rights

The bill dedicates \$700,000 in general and trust funds annually for legal services, including assistance with quiet title actions, kuleana tenant rights, land title issues, and family law matters. These funds are essential for protecting Native Hawaiian rights, preserving cultural practices, and advocating for equitable access to land and water resources.

5. Environmental Protection and Climate Adaptation

The allocation of \$600,000 in FY 2025-2026 and \$625,000 in FY 2026-2027 for environmental protection ensures that lands and waters sacred to Native Hawaiians are preserved. These funds will also support climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, ensuring the resilience of Hawaii's natural and cultural resources for future generations.

6. Economic Development and Workforce Readiness

With \$470,000 in FY 2025-2026 and \$495,000 in FY 2026-2027, this bill supports regional economic development through ahupua'a-based initiatives and workforce readiness programs. By fostering economic resilience within Native Hawaiian communities, these programs will help beneficiaries achieve self-sufficiency and contribute to Hawaii's overall economic growth.

Conclusion

S.B. No. 269 represents an unwavering commitment to supporting the well-being and empowerment of Native Hawaiian communities. The appropriations outlined in this bill will strengthen OHA's ability to advocate for beneficiaries while addressing key issues such as housing, education, legal rights, environmental stewardship, and economic development.

I respectfully urge this committee to pass **S.B. No. 269** and ensure that these vital resources are allocated to support the needs of Native Hawaiian beneficiaries. Your support of this bill is a step toward fulfilling the State's obligations to Native Hawaiians and ensuring a brighter and more equitable future for all.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this important measure.

Respectfully submitted, Ronnie Inagaki

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 12:57:21 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rene Kehau Schofield	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB269 (OHA Budget)

Hello,

My name is **Rene Kehaulani Schofield** and I live in **Pahoa, Hawaii**. I'm submitting testimony today *in support of SB269*.

As the Office of Hawaiian Affairs has explained, this bill to approve OHA's budget increase will allow for:

- Multiple new staff positions which will allow OHA to implement their strategic plan (Mana i Maui Ola) and expand its programs to support Lahui.
- Expanded use of **data-based decision-making**. Data is crucial, not only for understanding what's working well in a program, but also for understanding community needs (including those that OHA will address in areas of health, housing, education, and economic development) and adjusting organization/program focus and allocating resources accordingly. *This will ultimately make OHA's work more strategic and effective.*
- By developing--and making public--a dashboard of key/relevant data, OHA will be able to better tell the story of Kanaka OIwi, specifically what the greatest challenges, successes, and opportunities are that they're experiencing. *This will ultimately create greater transparency and improve public trust in OHA's work.*

Please vote yes on SB269.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Mahalo,

Rene Kehaulani Schofield

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 1:07:32 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacelyn Auna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of SB269 in hopes to provide the support for protecting our Iwi Kupuna. We need OHA to be on board in supporting and allocating the funding in protecting our Iwi Kupuna.

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 4:06:19 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ella Aki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support SB269. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Mahalo piha,

Ella H. Aki

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 4:17:57 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Waipa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of SB269 relating to the budget package for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,

Wendy Waipa

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 4:24:04 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tracy Spencer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in Full Support on SB269 to provide funding for additional staff to assist with OHA's Strategic Plan. Mahalo for accepting my testimony.

LATE

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Mālama,
Millie Ho

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:01:15 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerald Tariao Montano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Gerald Montano

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:31:58 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
heaven kupahu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Heaven Kupahu

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:41:28 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sunnie Kupahu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB268 for the following reasons:

Perpetuation of mālama iwi practices: SB268 strengthens the ability of island burial councils to fulfill their primary mission: to protect and mālama iwi kūpuna. By centering cultural knowledge and expertise, and removing the requirement that developer and large landowner interests have reserved seats on each council, this bill ensures the councils will represent Native Hawaiian cultural perspectives.

Increasing the effectiveness of burial councils: SB268 would also lower the number of individuals necessary for the councils to meet by removing the landowner seats. Quorum has historically been a roadblock to council decision making, leaving important community issues—including the recognition of lineal and cultural descendants—unresolved. Allowing councils to do business with a smaller number of members will help relieve this backlog and ensure that descendants have a voice in the protection and preservation of burial sites.

Implementing the state's trust duties: As recognized by the legislature when the burial councils were created in 1990, the public has a vital interest in the disposition of its interred persons, which is in the nature of a sacred trust for the benefit of all. The state also has a constitutional trust duty to protect Native Hawaiian traditional and cultural practices, including those related to mālama iwi. The island burial councils are an important means for the state to effectuate these trust duties by ensuring Native Hawaiians cultural perspectives are properly reflected in council decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB268**.

Sunnie Kupahu

Waimanalo Homestead

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:43:03 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
manuel kupahu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB268 for the following reasons:

Perpetuation of mālama iwi practices: SB268 strengthens the ability of island burial councils to fulfill their primary mission: to protect and mālama iwi kūpuna. By centering cultural knowledge and expertise, and removing the requirement that developer and large landowner interests have reserved seats on each council, this bill ensures the councils will represent Native Hawaiian cultural perspectives.

Increasing the effectiveness of burial councils: SB268 would also lower the number of individuals necessary for the councils to meet by removing the landowner seats. Quorum has historically been a roadblock to council decision making, leaving important community issues—including the recognition of lineal and cultural descendants—unresolved. Allowing councils to do business with a smaller number of members will help relieve this backlog and ensure that descendants have a voice in the protection and preservation of burial sites.

Implementing the state's trust duties: As recognized by the legislature when the burial councils were created in 1990, the public has a vital interest in the disposition of its interred persons, which is in the nature of a sacred trust for the benefit of all. The state also has a constitutional trust duty to protect Native Hawaiian traditional and cultural practices, including those related to mālama iwi. The island burial councils are an important means for the state to effectuate these trust duties by ensuring Native Hawaiians cultural perspectives are properly reflected in council decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB268**.

manuel Kupahu

LATE

SB269

Companion: HB410

He Mele komo a he mele aloha no na kupuna o ke au i hala Aloha mai kakou.

Aloha,

My name is Cindy Freitas and I'm a Native Hawaiian descended of the native inhabitants of Hawai'i prior to 1778 and born and raised in Hawai'i.

I am also a practitioner who still practice the cultural traditional customary practices that was instill in me by my grandparents at a young age from mauka (MOUNTAIN TO SEA) to makai in many areas.

I'm in SUPPORT of SB269

In this case, the process would focus on ensuring that OHA has the financial resources to continue its mission, which may include initiatives such as advocacy for Native Hawaiian rights, education, land management, and cultural preservation.

Mahalo,

____/s/____

Cindy Freitas

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:04:01 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelle C Pahinui	Testifying for Naalehu Theatre	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

Mahalo for this opportunity to support SB269 which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

As a beneficiary organization of OHA's valued community programing and outreach, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

'O au no me ka 'oia'i'o,

Chelle Pahinui, ED

Na'alehu Theatre

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:18:00 PM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander K.D. McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in STRONG support of **SB269**.

Mahalo.

LATE

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:27:58 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kapua Keliikoa-Kamai	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I support SB269 RELATING TO THE BUDGET OF THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS which increases funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to hire new staff and accelerate implementation of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The state has never allocated OHA its full pro rata share due by law and therefore periodic appropriations are just, fair, and necessary to enable OHA to meet its broad mandate to better the condition of Native Hawaiians.

I also understand that OHA's funding request will staff positions focused on leveraging partnerships with other state and county agencies and increasing transparency around OHA's work, including progress towards meeting its mandates. This is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars to ensure collaboration between and among government entities that serve Native Hawaiians and share common goals.

As a Native Hawaiian beneficiary and voter, I am excited to see that OHA's leadership is bringing innovative approaches to problems that have persisted for generations. The strategic direction undertaken by OHA is worthy of support from the legislature as we work together to provide opportunity and progress for all Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I respectfully urge the committee to **pass SB269**.

Me ke aloha,

Kapua Keliikoa-Kamai

OHA Beneficiary & Advocate

SB-269

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 11:56:16 AM

Testimony for HWN on 1/28/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorian K Cabanting	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This testimony expresses strong support for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA) request for a \$1,858,454 increase in FY26 and a \$1,996,208 increase in FY27 in general fund appropriations.

OHA plays a critical role in protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians, as enshrined in the Hawai'i State Constitution. Its mandate to serve as the principal public agency for Native Hawaiian programs and activities, assess the impact of other agencies' policies, and advocate for Native Hawaiian interests is essential for addressing the unique challenges and needs of this community.

The requested funding increase is crucial for several reasons:

- The rising cost of living necessitates increased funding to maintain the effectiveness of OHA's existing programs and services.
- The funding will support the implementation of OHA's strategic plan, Mana I Maui Ola, which aims to advance Native Hawaiian well-being across key areas such as health, housing, education, and economic development.
- OHA's commitment to transparency and accountability, as evidenced by the plan to publish dashboard progress reports, is commendable. This will ensure that the public and elected officials can closely monitor OHA's progress in fulfilling its mission.

Mahalo Nui Loa.

Brickwood Galuteria
Chair of Beneficiary Advocacy
& Empowerment Committee
Trustee, At-Large



Phone: (808) 594-1860

**OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

560 N. Nimitz Hwy., Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96817

LATE

January 27, 2025

Testimony in Support of Hawaii State Senate Bill 269

Aloha e Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 269, which seeks to increase the State Budget funding for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). This bill is crucial for the continued empowerment and advancement of Native Hawaiians, ensuring that OHA can effectively fulfill its mission to improve the well-being of the Hawaiian community.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs plays a vital role in addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by Native Hawaiians. Through its various programs and initiatives, OHA provides essential services in areas such as education, health, housing, and economic development. Increased funding will enable OHA to expand these programs, reach more individuals, and create lasting positive impacts on the community.

One of the key provisions of Senate Bill 269 is the addition of 13 staff positions to accelerate the implementation of OHA's strategic plan and further build out programs to deliver on mandates under Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapters 10 and 10H. This targeted increase in staffing is essential for enhancing OHA's capacity to address critical issues and effectively serve the Hawaiian community. These new positions will allow OHA to streamline operations, improve program delivery, and ensure that the strategic objectives are met in a timely and efficient manner.

Preserving and promoting Hawaiian culture and heritage is another important reason to support this bill. OHA's efforts in cultural preservation, language revitalization, and historical education are indispensable in maintaining the rich legacy of Native Hawaiians. By allocating additional resources, we can ensure that future generations continue to benefit from these cultural initiatives.

Brickwood Galuteria
Chair of Beneficiary Advocacy
& Empowerment Committee
Trustee, At-Large

Phone: (808) 594-1860



**OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

560 N. Nimitz Hwy., Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96817

Furthermore, the increased funding will enhance OHA's capacity to advocate for Native Hawaiian rights and interests at the local, state, and federal levels. This includes protecting ancestral lands, securing economic opportunities, and addressing social injustices. Strengthening OHA's financial foundation will empower the organization to be a more effective advocate for the Hawaiian community.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 269 is a critical step towards supporting the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and, by extension, the Native Hawaiian community. The addition of 13 staff positions will significantly accelerate the implementation of OHA's strategic plan and build out essential programs. I urge the committee to pass this bill and provide OHA with the necessary resources to continue its invaluable work.

Mahalo for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B' followed by a stylized flourish.

Brickwood M. Galuteria Chairman
Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment
Office of Hawaiian Affairs

BG:lad