



# Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Commission

*Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community*



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March 14, 2025

Senate's Committee on Judiciary  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Thursday, March 20, 2025

**RE: Strong Support for Senate Concurrent Resolution 179**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 1225 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus. (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature with the following purpose:

"...to improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government."

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission strongly supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 179, which requests the State LGBTQ+ Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women to review the Hawai'i Revised Statutes and make recommendations for gender-neutral language terminology.

The State of Hawai'i has long been a leader in advancing equality and inclusion for LGBTQIA+ individuals. In 2013, the Hawai'i State Legislature passed marriage equality, ensuring that same-sex couples have the legal right to marry and be recognized under state law. This landmark legislation affirmed the dignity and rights of LGBTQIA+ families, and it is imperative that the rest of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes reflect this legal recognition when addressing married couples.

Furthermore, in 2019, the Hawai'i State Legislature took another significant step forward by expanding gender markers on state identification cards and driver's licenses beyond the false gender binary of "F" for female and "M" for male. This progressive policy acknowledges that gender exists on a spectrum and respects the identities of nonbinary, genderqueer, and other gender-diverse individuals in Hawai'i.

Despite these advances, much of Hawai'i's statutory language continues to reinforce outdated and exclusionary gender assumptions. Terms such as "husband" and "wife" remain in statutes

*Proudly established pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 369, as enacted through Act 41, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022*

## HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Strong Support of SCR 179

where "spouse" would be more inclusive. Similarly, gendered pronouns are often used where neutral terms could better reflect the diversity of gender identities in our state. Updating these statutes to reflect gender-neutral language is not only a matter of inclusivity but also one of legal consistency with existing Hawai'i laws that affirm LGBTQIA+ rights.

Hawai'i has a proud history of embracing diversity and fostering a society where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. By ensuring that our laws reflect the full spectrum of gender identities and family structures, we take another important step toward equity and justice for all residents.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission urges the passage of this resolution to review and recommend gender-neutral terminology in the Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

Should you or any member of your staff have any questions regarding this testimony you can reach the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission at [hawaiiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com).

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify, and we respectfully ask for your support,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)  
Vice Chair  
[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)



# HAWAII STATE COMMISSION

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## ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

March 18, 2025

**Position: Support of SCR179/SR149**

**To:** Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

**From:** Llasmin Chaine, LSW, Executive Director, Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

**Re:** Testimony in Support of SCR179/SR149, Requesting the State LGBTQ+ Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women to Review the Hawaii Revised Statutes for Gender-Neutral Language Terminology

Hearing: Thursday, March 20, 2025, 10:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

On behalf of the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women, I would like to thank the committee for hearing these important resolutions. I would like to express my **support of SCR179/SR149**, Requesting the State LGBTQ+ Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women to Review the Hawaii Revised Statutes for Gender-Neutral Language Terminology, **and offer comments** on SCR179/SR149.

**I offer the following amendments to these resolutions for your consideration.:**

- **SCR179:**
  - Proposed resolution amendment to workgroup members, on page 2, lines 10-11:  
  
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LGBTQ+ Commission and **a designee from** the Commission on the Status of Women are requested to:
  - Proposed resolution amendment to workgroup deliverables and timeline given the scope of the review, on page 2, lines 20-24:  
  
(3) Submit ~~a~~ **an interim** report of their findings and recommendations, including proposed legislation containing the suggested statutory amendments, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026; ~~and~~

**(4) Submit a final report of their findings and recommendations, including proposed legislation containing the suggested statutory amendments, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027;**

**(5) The workgroup shall be dissolved on December 31, 2026; and**

- **SR149:**

- Proposed resolution amendment to workgroup members, on page 2, lines 6-7:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LGBTQ+ Commission and a **designee from** the Commission on the Status of Women are requested to:

- Proposed resolution amendment to workgroup deliverables and timeline given the scope of the review, on page 2, lines 16-20:

**(3) Submit a an interim** report of their findings and recommendations, including proposed legislation containing the suggested statutory amendments, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026; ~~and~~

**(4) Submit a final report of their findings and recommendations, including proposed legislation containing the suggested statutory amendments, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027;**

**(5) The workgroup shall be dissolved on December 31, 2026; and**

I respectfully urge this Committee to pass SCR179/SR149. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony and comments.

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 3:29:19 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SR149/SCR179. Please pass this resolution.

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 8:46:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Spencer Dehnavi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Correctly implementing gender neutral language is essential for clear and just inclusion of all persons a statute intends to specify.

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 9:00:48 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pride at Work – Hawai‘i	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice.

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i fully supports SCR 179. It is beyond time to review the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes to update them.

We ask that you support this needed resolution.

Mahalo,

[Pride at Work – Hawai‘i](#)

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 7:56:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael A. Cobb Jr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i oppose this measure. Waste of taxpayer money to change these statues.

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 10:39:30 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Philip Steinbacher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**As the Kaua'i representative to the Hawai'i LGBTQ+ Advisory Commission, I am writing in strong support of SCR 179, requesting the state LGBTQ+ Advisory Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women review the Hawai'i Revised Statutes and make recommendations for gender-neutral language and terminology. Using proper gender terminology and language is crucial for fostering respect, inclusion, and validation, especially for transgender, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming individuals, as misgendering can cause distress and marginalization. When someone is referred to with the incorrect or inaccurate terminology, they may feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or dysphoric or, often, all of the above. Gender-neutral language demonstrates inclusion for people who do not identify with the stereotypical gender binary. A commitment to treating everyone with due respect and dignity aligns with the spirit of aloha and the people of Hawai'i deserve no less.**

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 6:15:12 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrea Simpliciano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I think it's important now than ever to be inclusive of all identities and review the revised Hawai'i statutes for gender-neutral language terminology. Community feedback and discussion is important to come up with solutions and to make the statutes clear.

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 7:45:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Hawai'i has a proud history of embracing diversity and fostering a society where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

Same-sex relationships have been part of Hawaiian culture for centuries. The term [aikāne](#) refers to homosexual or bisexual relationships, which were widely accepted in pre-colonial Hawaiian society, and the term [māhū](#) refers to a "[third gender](#)" alongside male and female.

A 2013 [Williams Institute](#) survey showed that 5.1% of the Hawaii adult population identified as LGBT. This was the highest in the United States behind only the District of Columbia.

A 2017 Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) opinion poll found that 68% of Hawaii residents supported same-sex marriage, while 20% opposed it and 12% were unsure. The same poll also found that 74% of Hawaii residents supported an anti-discrimination law covering sexual orientation and gender identity, while 13% were opposed. Furthermore, 54% were against allowing businesses to refuse to serve gay and lesbian people due to religious beliefs, while 35% supported allowing such religiously based refusals.

By ensuring that our laws reflect the full spectrum of gender identities and family structures, we take another important step toward equity and justice for all residents.

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 3:11:37 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Frank Schultz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this initiative.

**Testimony for Senate Resolution 149**  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
March 20, 2025

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

RE: Testimony in support of SR149

My name is Marissa Miller-Danta and I am a social work intern at Spill The Tea Cafe, an inclusive mental health clinic for teens. Although I am expressing my own views and not speaking on behalf of STTC, working directly with the LGBTQIA+ community has opened my eyes to the impact that binary gendered language can have. I am in **strong support** of SR149. This binary gendered language currently found within the Hawai'i Revised Statutes perpetuates the exclusion of countless Hawai'i residents. Gender-neutral language removes the implication that one sex or gender is the norm, promoting social change and contributing to achieving gender equality.<sup>1</sup>

Multiple other states have realized that the impact of gendered language goes beyond being “politically correct” and have made efforts to modernize the language found within their statutes and require gender-neutral drafting, including California and Colorado.<sup>2</sup> Let's not let Hawai'i fall behind, and prove our commitment to fostering inclusivity, equality, and respect for all individuals by passing SR149, reviewing our Revised Statutes and implementing gender-neutral language.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,  
Marissa Miller-Danta  
UH Mānoa Social Work Student Intern, Spill The Tea Cafe (STTC)

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament. (2018). Gender-Neutral Language in the European Parliament. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/151780/GNL\\_Guidelines\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/151780/GNL_Guidelines_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Micheli, C. (2023, September 14). The Micheli Files: California statutes are being modernized, including gender neutral drafting - Capitol Weekly. Capitol Weekly. <https://capitolweekly.net/the-micheli-files-california-statutes-are-being-modernized-including-gender-neutral-drafting/#:~:text=California%20is%20one%20of%20many,followed%20by%20the%20bill%20drafter.>



Senate Committee on Judiciary

Testifying in support of SR149

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and all committee members,

My name is Holly-Jill Zablan, and I am a social work student at The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. These opinions are my own and do not represent this organization.

I am grateful for this opportunity to advocate and testify in strong support of SR149.

We are living in a time of increasing division, and it is now more crucial than ever to take a stand for equality and inclusivity. Across the nation, we are witnessing alarming attempts to roll back hard-won rights and erase the identities of marginalized communities. SR149 represents a powerful counterpoint to these regressive efforts, affirming that in Hawai‘i, we move forward, not backward.

As the Aloha State, we have a unique responsibility to embody the values of love, acceptance, and respect for all. Aloha Spirit is a fundamental principle of our culture that celebrates our interconnectedness and honors the dignity of every individual. By updating our laws to use gender-neutral language, as requested in SR149, we are putting Aloha Spirit into action, ensuring that our statutes, like our state identification (as updated in 2019), reflect the inclusive spirit that makes Hawai‘i special.

This resolution is more than a linguistic update; it is a crucial step towards fostering inclusivity, equality, and respect for all individuals, regardless of gender identity or expression, as stated in SR149. At a time when some seek to divide us, Hawai‘i can lead by example, ensuring that all individuals are equally recognized and protected under state law.

By supporting SR149, we affirm our commitment to modernizing our Hawai‘i Revised Statutes to reflect the diverse identities of Hawai‘i’s residents, as described in the resolution. Let us embrace this opportunity to stand firm in our values and show the world that in Hawai‘i, everyone belongs, everyone matters, and our laws will reflect the full spectrum of human identity. Let us work together to ensure Hawai‘i’s legal framework promotes inclusivity for all.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Holly-Jill Zablan

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 6:29:32 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shanda Brack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution which will ensure ALL Hawaii residents will have the ability to see themselves in our government documents. As a woman, I grew up seeing nearly everything gendered as male, "Fireman, Policeman, Workman's Comp, All men are created equal" etc. This may seem like a small thing, but it has the subtle and pernicious effect of making women and girls feel invisible. Inclusion matters and helps everyone have an opportunity to thrive. Why would we not want everyone to see themselves as full citizens of our beautiful state?

This is a small thing that can help tip the balance toward equality, which everyone deserves and is in alignment with the spirit of aloha.

Thank you for your efforts.

Shanda Brack, APRN

**SR-149**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 12:17:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael EKM Olderr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill