

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.C.R. 11 HD 1 SD 1

**REQUESTING THE STATUS OF WOMEN TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE ON
MURDERED AND MISSING NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS**

SENATOR KARL RHOADS, CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Hearing Date: 4/16/2021

Room Number: Via Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports this measure requesting
- 3 the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women (HSCSW) to convene a task force to
- 4 improve the health of Native Hawaiian women and girls at-risk for all forms of violence
- 5 including domestic violence and involvement in sex trafficking and the sex industry.
- 6 The DOH agrees for the director or designee to serve on the task force. The task force objectives
- 7 support the DOH with information and data that will assist in developing and distributing
- 8 information to prevent violence, sexual trafficking, and the promotion of healthy outcomes for
- 9 Native Hawaiian females. The DOH currently provides trainings and resources to domestic
- 10 violence partners on teen dating, developing respectful healthy relationships, and a sexual
- 11 violence prevention train-the-trainer curriculum for educators of middle and high school
- 12 students. Additionally, the DOH-supported statewide network of family planning providers
- 13 conduct annual trainings on identifying and screening for domestic violence and abuse of
- 14 adolescents and women of reproductive age.
- 15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Thirty-First Legislature, 2021 Regular Session

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

Friday, April 16, 2021, 10:00 a.m.
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

by
Rodney A. Maile
Administrative Director of the Courts

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Measure No. and Title: House Concurrent Resolution No. 11, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, Requesting the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women to Convene a Task Force to Study Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary respectfully supports the intent of House Concurrent Resolution No. 11, H.D.1, S.D.1, which requests that the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women convene a task force to conduct a study regarding missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls.

The Judiciary is committed to participating in the newly-created task force to effectuate its purpose as stated in this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Hawaii
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: **HCR 11, HD1, SD1 - Requesting the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women to Convene a Task Force to Study Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls**
Hawai'i State Capitol, via videoconference
April 16, 2021, 10:00 AM

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and committee members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in SUPPORT of HCR 11, HD1, SD1. This resolution requests the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women to convene a task force to study missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls.

Before reports on sex trafficking in Hawai'i were published, very few people thought sex trafficking was a problem here. The studies revealed just how large the problem is and started our community dialoguing on what we need to do to protect the lives of women and girls.

In addition, this month's *Data Justice* report¹ by Papa Ola Lokahi, a Native Hawaiian health advocacy organization, and the Hawai'i Budget & Policy Center highlighted the lack of adequate data about the Native Hawaiian community and called for the state to improve its collection of ethnic and racial data.

Similarly, at this time we do not have information on missing and murdered indigenous girls and women (MMIWG). The task force requested by these resolutions would be an important first step toward filling these gaps in data about Native Hawaiian women and girls.

However, we do know that rates of gender-based violence are higher for indigenous women. We know that Native Hawaiian women are more economically vulnerable because of inequity in their pay. We know that trafficking is a contributing factor to MMIWG. We need better information to learn where we our failing indigenous girls and women so that we may, as a community, better protect them.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this resolution.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director, Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://www.hibudget.org/projects/data-justice>

HCR-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/14/2021 11:08:02 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/16/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laurie Field	Testifying for Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates - Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates - Hawaii supports HCR 11, HD1, SD1. Thank you!



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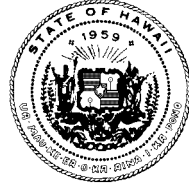
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Nicole Woo
Director, Research and Economic Policy

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LATE



‘O kēia ‘ōlelo hō’ike no ke
Komikina Kūlana Olakino o Nā Wāhine

Testimony on behalf of the
Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women
Khara Jabola-Carolus, Executive Director

In support of HCR11 HD1 SD1
April 16, 2021

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Honorable Members,

The Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women supports HCR11 HD1 SD1, wherein the Legislature requests the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women co-convene a task force to conduct a study on missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls and to submit a report on the study to the Legislature.

The Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women was the first statewide feminist government agency in the United States. The Commission is committed to noncarceral, community-driven solutions to women’s safety. We understand that each taskforce member named by the Legislature in this resolution was selected for the data they collect so that accurate and comprehensive data sharing is possible.

The absence of data is not absence of a problem. HCR11 HD1 SD1 seeks to address the absence of information around the international and national crisis “missing and murdered indigenous women and girls” (MMIWG) in Hawai‘i. SCR8 was inspired by First Nations organizing in Canada and across Indian country in United States. The Commission is concerned about the high rate of gendered violence against Native Hawaiian women and believes a similar, invisible may exist across Hawai‘i.

Women’s advocacy in Hawai‘i has not adequately addressed the unique experiences of Native Hawaiian women. MMIWG is a conversation about sexualization and colonization of Native women. There is a nexus between MMIWG and sex trafficking— a crime which has an intense impact on individual and community well-being. Sexual trafficking and rape are an assault on human dignity.¹ Yet until 2019, there was no state data on the prevalence of sex trafficking victimization among Native Hawaiians or even on the sex market in Hawai‘i.

¹ See Christine Boyle, *What Makes “Model” Sexual Offenses? A Canadian Perspective*, 4 BUFF. CRIM.L. REV. 487, 492 (2000).

The Commission functions as the state's information center on women and girls. In 2018, the agency in partnership with Arizona State University's Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention and Research embarked to produce the first comprehensive research on sex trafficking in the state's 61-year history. The pre-inquiry process of interviews with social service providers and criminal justice personnel indicated that Native Hawaiian women and girls are being sex trafficked in Hawai'i, over state lines, and even across international borders.

In addition, initial peer-reviewed, empirical data shows that Native Hawaiian women appear to be disproportionately victimized:

- 77% of 22 sex trafficking victims were Native Hawaiian, and 100% identified as women²
- 64% of 97 sex trafficking victims were Native Hawaiian, and 75% identified as women³
- Current overrepresentation of Native Hawaiian women and girls in sex trafficking at present may be directly linked vulnerabilities that trace to the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i—that is, land dispossession, exposure to sexual violence, hypersexualization, incarceration, cultural dislocation, intergenerational trauma, mental and emotional distress, racism, poverty, and ongoing inequities.⁴

Our research has also found that sex trafficking victims were more likely to report negative experiences with law enforcement, and that law enforcement has been complicit in sex trafficking in Hawai'i. Sexual exploitation by law enforcement and the threat of criminal sanction of survivors along with few services available has prevented many survivors of sexual exploitation from getting help. This measure allow a new approach to take hold that centers gender equity, racial justice and indigenous sovereignty.

Accordingly, the Commission supports HCR11 HD1 as an important step to radically improve the safety of Native Hawaiian women and children in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Khara Jabola-Carolus

² Jabola-Carolus, K. & Roe-Sepowitz, D., *Sex Trafficking in Hawai'i Part II: The Stories of Survivor*, Arizona State University, Jan. 2019.

³ Jabola-Carolus, K. & Roe-Sepowitz, D., *Sex Trafficking in Hawai'i Part III: Sex Trafficking Across Hawai'i*, Arizona State University, Feb. 2020.

⁴ *Id.* at 1.

LATE

HCR-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/15/2021 10:32:22 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/16/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kassidy Wedemeyer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

House Concurrent Resolution No. 11

Aloha, my name is Kassidy Wedemeyer, and I'm a junior BSW (Bachelors of Social Work) student at the University of Hawaii Manoa. I represent my BSW cohort. Today I testify in support of House Concurrent Resolution No. 11. The purpose of this measure is to request that the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women convene a task force to study missing and murdered native Hawaiian women and girls.

I strongly support House Concurrent Resolution No. 11. Missing and murdered indigenous women have been a prevalent problem across the nation. When I search "Hula girl" on google images, I immediately get swamped by pictures of half-naked and ideal-bodied Native Hawaiian women implying that they are sexual. This colonial stereotype may play a part in Native Hawaiian women becoming victims of sex trafficking, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation. As a Native Hawaiian woman, I never want to worry about myself or the other Hawaiian women and girls in my family becoming missing and murdered. Conducting research can help us get answers as to why Native Hawaiian women and girls are going missing.

Thank you for taking the time out of your day to listen to me. Supporting this measure can help create a safer environment for Native Hawaiian women.

Mahalo,
Kassidy Wedemeyer