

LATE TESTIMONY

**HB 1658 Relating to Education**

House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs  
Rep. Mele Carroll, Chair  
Rep. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Date: February 11, 2009

Time: 9:30am

Room: 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) supports HB 1658 and respectfully submits this testimony in *kākoʻo* of this measure.

Hawaiʻi and the world recognizes the ingenuity and migratory feats of our *kūpuna* and *hoʻyokele* (wayfinders) who courageously and successfully navigated the vast Pacific Ocean, *Ka Piko o Wākea*. The resurgence of Polynesian wayfinding traditions over the last three decades in Hawaiʻi and across the Pacific is a strong indication of our cultural reawakening and affirmation of our traditional ways of knowing and our cultural identity as *ʻōiwi*.

Whereas 53% of Hawaiʻi public school students, 60,000+, are Hawaiian children, it is essential that the State DOE fully implement Hawaiian language and Hawaiian cultural studies curriculum as mandated since 1978 by Article X, Section 4 of the Hawaiʻi State Constitution. Education of our Hawaiian beneficiaries, in the *ʻike* and traditional skills of wayfinding will certainly inspire and motivate Native Hawaiian children to learn the scientific, navigational skills and cultural wisdom of their forebears, valued and validated by its inclusion in public school curriculum. The success of Hawaiian language education, as well as the achievement of the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) and the iconic *Hōkūleʻa* over these same decades, is a testament of resilience and intelligence. These positive skills and characteristics must continue to be instilled in our schools in order to ensure the educational and cultural well-being of our Hawaiian people.

This measure, **HB 1658**, would establish a state funded pilot program to incorporate traditional Hawaiian navigational education in public schools. This concept and effort, however is not a new one. Since the mid-1990s, the DOE in collaboration with the PVS have implemented such a program called *Hoʻyolōkahi*, in various public high schools with significant enrollments of Hawaiian students - Kailua, Castle, Kaiser, Waipahu and Waiyanae. It has been proven to be successful in those pilot schools. Students, faculty, community organizations and resources all benefited from this collaboration. It provided opportunities and for all to learn cultural skills and protocols

relative to astronomy, aquaculture, agriculture, mariner skills and canoebuilding.

OHA urges your support of this measure and its intent to ensure Native Hawaiian students access to culturally-sound educational practices and opportunities that will improve academic achievement while maintaining the revitalization of Hawaiian cultural practices. Mahalo for the opportunity to present this testimony.



*Wai'anae Hawaiian Civic Club*  
*Since 1935*

P.O. Box 687  
Wai'anae, Hawaii 96792  
Fax/Phone: (808) 696-2932

LAIB TESTIMONY

From: Gege Kawelo, President

To: Committee Hawaiian Affairs

Subj: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 1658 –RELATING TO EDUCATION**

February 10, 2009

Aloha Chairperson Carroll, Vice-Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1658, which establishes and funds a traditional Hawaiian navigation pilot program in the public schools.

The Wai'anae Hawaiian Civic Club (WHCC) is a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization founded almost 75 years ago. One of the club's long-term goal(s) began in 1978 whereby the WHCC invited community leaders, residents, opio (youth) and makua (young adult) to build a smaller replica of a native Hawaiian voyaging canoe which the club named E Ala (to awaken, awakening) to be used to strengthen the cultural and educational needs of both children and adults.

Since E Ala's conception, the canoe (wa'a) has been used to educate students on O'ahu, and by other organizations for training purposes, and more recently the leasing of E Ala by the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS). E Ala's mission is its continuity to provide immediate and high school students an ongoing opportunity to learn about ancient sailing from their teachers and crew members. Students serve as assistants to these seasoned kupunas (elders) so that the student in turn, will eventually become the teacher. Our mission is to continue to be the steward of E Ala.

In 2003, a Strategic Plan between WHCC and PVS was to initiate to return E Ala to the West Coast of O'ahu (Leeward Coast); to begin this transition, the WHCC began both classroom and canoe onsite training of residents and students from this side of the island that resulted in the graduation of a first ever navigational crew.

Unfortunately, WHCC is only able to train small groups of students at a time, and not as it should be – to train the masses (missing gap) which is non-existent as a course in ancient sailing is not currently being offered by the Department of Education unlike the hula, mele and oli.

Ancient sailing is an integral part of Hawaii's cultural – the most important as it being the major use of transportation utilized by ancient sailors that brought our people to these Hawaiian isles.

# LATE TESTIMONY

Page 1: HB 1658

To address the issue of the “missing gap”, in 2007 at the AHCC’s annual convention in Anchorage, Alaska, WHCC presented a resolution to conduct a feasibility study supporting the implementation of a traditional navigational sailing course in the curriculum of the Hawaii public intermediate and high schools.

With the passing of HB1658, ancient sailing taught throughout O`ahu’s immediate and high schools will have a positive impact upon the “missing gap”, as students will learn the history, building of a wa`a, and the increased knowledge of traditional navigational sailing.

I thank the committee for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1658.

Malama Pono.

# LATE TESTIMONY

Aloha,

Thank you for allowing me to present testimony in support of HB1658 providing the DOE with Navigational Curriculum.

The E ala voyaging canoe is an existing "tool and resource" for both teachers and students to help restore and revive this long lost art of traditional voyaging. This is how we got here. The curriculum is already written and has been presented to key people in the Leeward Coast schools including Leeward Comm. College and our community over 2 years ago. Act 133 mandates the state to provide Hawaiian instruction and curriculum in all schools. The struggle is how to implement this mandate into the schools. Wai'anae Hawaiian Civic Club has been the champion of this cause for years and has succeeded through hard work in taking this part of our culture and putting it into standards. Although much of the hands-on instruction requires getting into the ocean which brings huge liability issues, let's be creative and not get stuck on that. Other school water activities (surfing, sailing, etc.) have been allowed to skirt around the issue. NCLB doesn't allow us to really incorporate traditional Hawaiian concepts into our school system; perhaps we need to change/propose an amendment to that part of NCLB.

Mahalo.

Ruby Maunakea, Pelekikena

Nanaikapono Hawaiian Civic Club

89-081 Kihonua Pl

Wai'anae HI 96792-3813

Cell: 808-348-4152