



Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs
P. O. Box 1135
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96807

TESTIMONY OF LEIMOMI KHAN, PRESIDENT
IN SUPPORT OF

LATE TESTIMONY

H.B. 908 - Relating to Tuition Waivers in the University of Hawai'i System

Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Hearing date, time and place:

Wednesday, February 11, 2009 9:30 a.m. Conf. Rm. 329

Aloha Chairperson Carroll, Vice-Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of House Bill 908, which requires the board of regents to grant tuition waivers for Native Hawaiian students in the University of Hawai'i system.

The academic and economic support provided by the tuition waivers can have far-reaching positive consequences for the State as a whole. As more Native Hawaiians are able to earn college degrees, more Native Hawaiians will be able to pursue the highest levels of academic and professional development.

As the bill notes,

Native Hawaiian students comprise approximately twenty-six percent of Hawai'i's public school population and more than eighty-five per cent of those Native Hawaiians finish high school. However, while about half of all Native Hawaiian high school graduates go on to attend college, they have the lowest college graduation rates of all ethnic groups in Hawai'i. Of those who are able to attend college, far fewer actually graduate with a college degree than students from any other ethnic group in the State. According to the University of Hawai'i's institutional research office, Native Hawaiians account for only fourteen percent of the total University of Hawai'i student population.

The low numbers of Native Hawaiians with college and professional degrees seriously affects the ability of Hawai'i's indigenous people to participate in the State's higher education system as professors, deans, administrators, and policy makers. At the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, only four percent of all faculty positions are held by Native Hawaiians and less than one percent of permanently tenured positions are held by Native Hawaiians.

The Association is in strong support of House Bill 908 because its membership agrees that through their participation in networks of civic responsibility in the professional, academic, business, and other arenas, Native Hawaiian graduates of the

University of Hawaii system will be able to contribute more effectively to the economic and social health of the State of Hawai`i and the Native Hawaiian people. We urge this Committee to support this bill.

By way of information, the Association is a growing national confederation of fifty-five Hawaiian Civic Clubs, located throughout the State of Hawai`i and in the States of Alaska, California, Colorado, Illinois, Nevada, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia and Washington State. It initiates and works to support actions that enhance the civic, economic, educational, health and social welfare of our communities, and in particular, the culture and welfare of the Native Hawaiian community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 908.



KO'OLAUPOKO HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB

February 11, 2009

TO: Rep. Mele Carroll, Chair
And Members
House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Mahealani Cypher, President
Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club

SUBJECT: H. B. 908, Relating to Tuition Waivers

LATE TESTIMONY

The Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club supports House Bill 908 and urges this committee to pass this bill.

We should remind the State of Hawai'i that the University of Hawai'i campus sits on ceded lands, and it would only be fair that native Hawaiian students, who make up less than one-fifth of the student population, be given tuition waivers.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share our mana'o.

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Testimony for HB908
Camille Rockett, Masters of Social Work Student, UH Manoa
Before the House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

LATE TESTIMONY

PLEASE PASS THIS BILL!

I am writing to support the passage of HB908, to provide tuition waivers for native Hawaiian students enrolled in higher education programs at UH Manoa.

I am a Master's student in the School of Social Work at UH Manoa. I was born and raised in Hawaii, on the island of Maui, but I do not have Hawaiian blood.

While attending public school as a youth, I was not aware of the racial stratifications that still exist in our state. After attending Stanford University and studying Urban Studies, Race and Ethnic Studies, and Education, I began to understand the dynamics of race and socioeconomic status in our country. Extrapolating the racial and ethnic disparities in every system in our country to Hawaii, I realized that Hawaii wasn't the utopian melting pot I had previously thought. I was lucky enough to have an upbringing where education and academic achievement were valued. However, I never realized that all of my honors classes were populated by students of Asian or White ancestry.

I believe that sometimes because we see more people of Hawaiian descent in college and other professions here in Hawaii than on the mainland, we mistakenly believe that there is an equal playing ground. Right now, I am convinced that this mistaken belief is a detriment to the people who are not born into that equal playing field, especially for our brothers and sisters of Hawaiian heritage.

Hawaii originally belonged to the Native Hawaiians, and ever since it was stolen from them by those who believed in manifest destiny, Hawaiians have dealt with horrific injustice. The same races that dominate the continental US have come to control Hawaii's land, jobs, and future. I believe this is a great wrong. As a social worker, I believe we must right the wrongs we have committed. HB908 will provide small step in the direction of empowering Hawaiian students to overcome socioeconomic barriers. I hope and pray that my children will be able to live in a state that has committed to fight racial injustice through measures such as this. Mahalo.

Francine Mae Lehuanani Aona Kenyon
2520 Jasmine Street
Honolulu, HI 96816

Wednesday, February 11, 2009
9:30 AM in House Conference Room 329

**TESTIMONY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
HOUSE BILL 908, RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

Aloha, Chair Carroll and members of House Committee on Transportation,

My name is Francine Aona Kenyon. I am an avid deaf advocate and am a part-Hawaiian myself. I am sorry I am unable to attend the hearing this morning because of my job commitment.

I strongly support the House Bill 908, Relating to Tuition Waivers in the University of Hawaii system because of my potentiality of continuing higher education to get the doctoral degree.

Some U.H. professors, even my grandparents and parents, encouraged me to continue schooling and get the doctoral degree because of my being both deaf and part-Hawaiian which is very unique.

When I applied for the doctoral degree at the University of Hawaii in 1992, I was informed that U.H. did not accept the Master of Divinity degree I received from Wesley Theological Seminary in 1986. Thus, I was somewhat discouraged and decided to enroll at American School of Professional Psychology that accepted the M.Div. But the tuition there was very high. I resumed higher education at U.H. on part-time basis on my own expenses because at that time Alu Like and OHA only offered the financial assistance to Hawaiians for full-time graduate study. I couldn't find anything that meets the satisfaction of my educational needs and interests; thus, I continued enrolling as unclassified post-graduate student at U.H. until I ended schooling in 2002 because of financial hardship. Recently, I found a particular interest in the master and doctoral programs that Walden University in Baltimore, MD, offered. I am considering to enroll at Walden University online for the second master's and doctoral degrees and to transfer of all U.H. credits I earned since 1988 with the hope of getting some kind of financial assistance.

I definitely support the passage of House Bill #908 that would provide tuition waivers to full or part-Hawaiians desiring to pursue higher education on either full-time or part-time basis in order to obtain the master's and the doctoral degrees. Mahalo!

Sincerely,

Francine Aona Kenyon