

FRIENDS FOR WAIALUA ~~LAW~~ TESTIMONY

A NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, & OCEAN RESOURCES

Friday, February 5, 2010

9:00 am

Conference Room 325, State Capitol, 415 Beretainia Street

Aloha Chair Ito and Committee Members:

Friends for Waialua Town strongly supports HB 1973 - RELATING TO DESECRATION: Amends the state of mind for the offense of desecration of a burial site from intentional to negligent. We urge your committee to support and pass out this bill to amend the law relating to the desecration of graves.

In Waialua, Puuiki Cemetery has long been the resting place for many of the family of community residents and is deeply cherished by many on Oahu today.

Unfortunately, it has been the victim of thoughtless individuals who have left their opala behind on the gravestones, who have desecrated the graves by toppling stones over and have desecrated the graves by "decorating" with graffiti - most recently this weekend.

This vandalism goes beyond monetary concerns and inflicts emotional scars upon the family when they see family gravesites desecrated.

Amending the language in the law from "intentional" to "negligent" will allow the police and prosecutors greater ability to arrest and charge individuals when apprehended at the cemetery in the process of or after an act of desecration.

We appreciate your support and consideration of this bill.

Malama aina,

Kathleen M. Pahinui
President
Friends for Waialua Town

LATE TESTIMONY

Judy Fomin

From: Jacob Ng [jacobng@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2010 5:21 PM
To: Judy Fomin
Cc: Kathleen Pahinui; Michael Lyons
Subject: HB 1973 RELATING TO DESECRATION

Judy:

Pls. fwd my testimony in support of HB 1973 to:

Representative Ken Ito, Chair
Committee on Water, Land, & Ocean Resources
State Capitol
House of Representative

Dear Chair Ito:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1973 RELATING TO DESECRATION. The passage of this measure would provide additional enforcement opportunities for law and Judicial agencies to prosecute violators, who desecrate cemeteries. This measure would also serve as a deterrent to inconsiderate violators of sacred cultural customs. As a matter of fact, as a young person in the community, my job was to help print in English the names of immigrant plantation workers buried in Puuiki Cemetery onto the tombstone. Many of these tombstones no longer can be found due to vagrancies, desecration, and tsunamis.

The Puuiki Cemetery in Waialua was used by the Waialua Sugar Company to bury old time workers of yesteryears. Many different ethnic personnel is buried in this cemetery. However, over time and with the passing of the old timers and the younger generation moving away, the cemetery fell into disrepair due to lack of maintenance. Several ethnic groups including the Koreans, Catholics, and others have taken over much of the maintenance work. Organizations such as the Friends of Waialua Town, the North Shore Neighborhood Board No. 27 and others have assisted in improving the security and maintenance of the cemetery with fencing and barriers. However, the desecration of Puuiki Cemetery continued and I understand that the police is unable to fully cite the violators because of the existing law.

Again, please help the Waialua community and the concerned kins of their members buried in Puuiki Cemetery mitigate desecration of cemeteries by passing HB 1973. Thank you.

Jacob Ng, Waialua resident
Member of:
North Shore Neighborhood Board No. 27
Friends of Waialua Town, Inc.