



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 29, 2015

TO: The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Chair
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Rachael Wong, Director

SUBJECT: SCR 169/SR 105: REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONSULT THE NA KUPUNA TRIBUNAL TO FORM A WORKING GROUP TO DETERMINE HOW THE NA KUPUNA TRIBUNAL CAN BEST ASSIST THE COURTS AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN CHILDREN IN MATTERS RELATING TO CHILD CUSTODY AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES.

Hearing: Monday, March 30, 2015; 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Senate Concurrent Resolution is to request the Department of Human Services (DHS) consult with the Na Kupuna Tribunal to form a working group to determine how the Na Kupuna Tribunal can best assist the courts and Native Hawaiian children in matters relating to child custody and native Hawaiian children who have been removed from their homes.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the measure and offers the following comments. The DHS respectfully requests that the Legislature convene the working group, either through the Keiki Caucus or as a

joint committee, as the complexity of factors that contribute to the persistent percentage of child welfare cases that involve native Hawaiian children are beyond DHS Child Welfare Services' (CWS) mandated purview. Further, the DHS CWS does not have the additional administrative personnel or budget to lead this effort.

The DHS acknowledges that although the number of children placed in foster care has decreased since State Fiscal Year 2004, there remains a high percentage of child welfare cases that involve native Hawaiian children and their families. A working group that may include the groups identified in the resolution, as well as other interested community members including other public and private agencies, would inform and assist the DHS to improve long term outcomes for native Hawaiian children and families involved in the child welfare system, and potentially lead to efforts to prevent entry into the child welfare system as well.

For more than a decade, the DHS launched a number of different initiatives to engage the native Hawaiian community and the community at large in developing and planning of practices and programs to increase relative placements, family involvement in decision making, identifying and engaging with birth family members, recruitment of native Hawaiian resource caregivers, and other activities designed to improve outcomes for native Hawaiian and other children involved in child welfare system. Currently, DHS, in conjunction with the Casey Family Programs, is engaged in a number of projects in different communities throughout the state that address issues in the Native Hawaiian community that relate to child welfare.

The DHS would appreciate the Legislature's leadership to convene the working group to determine how the Native Hawaiian community may continue to assist the DHS in meeting its mandated responsibilities and achieve the shared goals of reducing the number of Native Hawaiian and other children requiring involvement with the child welfare system, and improving the outcomes and well-being of children who require the State's protective intervention.

The DHS defers to the Judiciary with regard to references in the resolution to the court system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [HWNTestimony](#)
Cc: hallumsmaile@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR169 on Mar 30, 2015 14:00PM
Date: Monday, March 30, 2015 6:41:30 AM
Attachments: [SCR169 .pdf](#)

SCR169

Submitted on: 3/30/2015

Testimony for HWN/HSB on Mar 30, 2015 14:00PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
maile k hallums	Na Kupuna Tribunal	Support	No

Comments: On behalf of the statewide Kupuna Councils, Na Kupuna Tribunal offers its heartfelt mahalo to this august body for its support of the work proposed before us today. The past fifteen years have been arduous, but fulfilling and we look forward to a more collaborative, as well as cooperative, relationship in preserving the sanctity of family and the well-being of our children in crisis. 'O wau 'iho no, Kupuna Maile K Hallums, Leo Hano Na Kupuna Tribunal

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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