

17 Malaki 2026 / 3.17.26

To: Senator Chris Lee and members of the Senate Committee of Water, Land, and Culture and the Arts (WLA)

From: Dr. Zachary Ikaika Bantolina

Re: GM 651 – Nomination to the King Kamehameha Celebration Commission – In Support

Hearing Date: 18 Malaki 2026 / 3.18.26

Time: 1:00 pm

E ke Kōmike Alaka'i 'o Chris Lee a me Nā Lālā Kōmike,

My name is Dr. Zachary Ikaika Bantolina and I am a resident of Mililani. I am a loyal member of the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, Moku o Hawai'i, Chapter One, and I will be replacing Mr. Kainoa Daines, a long time member of the commission. And it is time for me to step up to the role and tend to the kuleana on behalf of the royal society.

I am writing in Support of GM 651, which is my honor to serve as a commissioner to perpetuate the legacy of our first king of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

My purpose to serve as a commissioner is to continue to uphold and advance the legacy of a 155 year old national holiday that was established by Lot Kapuaiwa Kamehameha V, the great-grandson of Kamehameha I.

As a commissioner, my kūlana and kuleana, role and responsibility, is to represent the Royal Order of Kamehameha I to give advice, to plan, and to implement events, on or near, the holiday date of June Eleventh. I have the ability to lead with aloha and carryout the huge task. I have become a respected Kānaka 'Ōiwi community leader that contributed to promoting, guarding, and maintaining the legacies of our ali'i.

In my diverse career, I have developed skills in strategic planning and project management. My qualities and experiences are:

- Former state board member of the Historic Places Review Board from 2015 to 2019.
- 12 combined years teaching Native Hawaiians with the ability to collaborate, lead, and independently manage major tasks.
- 10 years as a Hawaiian Cultural Specialist with the ability to incorporate Hawaiian knowledge and practices in programming and special initiatives.
- 8 years as a Hawaiian Architectural Advisor with the ability to strategize through creativity and innovation that is culturally aligned.
- Extensive knowledge and practice of Hawaiian traditions – hula, oli, 'ōlelo Hawai'i, makakū Hawai'i (Hawaiian design), and mo'omeiwi (storytelling).

One of my goals I hope to accomplish during my term as commissioner is to reinvigorate the intention of the holiday by doing more outreach and education to the people of Hawai'i about the importance of the celebration, how one king had organized unity and cultivated the principles of benevolence, being pono, and infused the spirit of loyalty and patriotism.

I am confident that I can lead and advance initiatives of the King Kamehameha Celebration Commission. My lifelong commitment is to preserve our native culture and traditions as well as to advance our native identity.

Mahalo iā 'oukou pākahi apau, thank you all for giving me this opportunity to speak. Kīhei a mauli ola.

STATE OF HAWAII



LATE

KING KAMEHAMEHA CELEBRATION COMMISSION
355 NORTH KING STREET, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

March 19, 2026

Senate Committee of Water, Land, and Culture and the Arts (WLA)
The Honorable Senator Lee, Chair
And Members of the Committee

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, March 23, 2026, at 1:16 pm
PLACE: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Aloha e Honorable Senator Lee and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of Dr. Zachary Ikaika Bantolina is who is being considered for confirmation to the King Kamehameha Celebration Commission for a term to expire on 06-30-2029 as outlined in GM651.

As Executive Director of the King Kamehameha Celebration Commission, I strongly support the appointment of Dr. Bantolina, representing the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, Moku o Hawai'i, Chapter One, to the King Kamehameha Celebration Commission. He has been instrumental in participating in the King Kamehameha Celebration Lei Draping Ceremony and Parade for many years. He represents with distinction and shares his 'Ōlelo Hawai'i skills and provides professional and culturally accurate guidance as he represents himself and the Commission. Ikaika is instrumental in helping us move forward toward accomplishing many of our goals.

I strongly urge you to vote in favor of his appointment.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Hammond".

Amy Hammond
Executive Director
King Kamehameha Celebration Commission
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