

JOSH GREEN, M. D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



J.N. MUSTO, PhD
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR
KE PO'O KUKAKUKA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
KE KE'ENA MĀLAMA LIMAHANA AUPUNI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA
235 S. BERETANIA STREET, SUITE 1201
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of
J.N. Musto, PhD
Chief Negotiator, Office of Collective Bargaining

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & ARTS
Friday, February 13, 2026
9:15AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
HB2045, Relating to State Holidays

(WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY)

Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and the members of the committee:

The Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) appreciates the intent of HB2045 which designates La Hoihoi Ea, Sovereignty Restoration Day, as a state holiday in place of Statehood Day. However, OCB offers the following comments on this measure:

1. While the Legislature is the governing body to both establish and remove official state holidays, the potential impact on public employees is a negotiable matter, subject to collective bargaining pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), §89-9.
2. Therefore, should La Hoihoi Ea, Sovereignty Restoration Day, be established as an official state holiday, it would have no effect on public workers unless it is negotiated and mutually agreed to.
3. Similarly, Statehood Day would need to be removed as an observed holiday for public employees. If not, the employer would have serious concerns regarding the operational and financial impact to the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and comments on this measure.



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

KOMIKINA PONO KĪWILA O HAWAI‘I

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411, HONOLULU, HI 96813 · PHONE: (808) 586-8636 · FAX: (808) 586-8655 · TDD: (808) 586-8692

DATE: Friday, February 13, 2026
TIME: 9:15 am
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 309
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

To:

[COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & ARTS](#)

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Chair

Rep. Sam Satoru Kong, Vice Chair

From: Alphonso Braggs, Chair

and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: HB 2045 Relating to State Holidays

Testimony in SUPPORT

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5. HCRC has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai‘i’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment (Chapter 378, Part I, HRS), housing (Chapter 515, HRS), public accommodations (Chapter 489, HRS), and access to state and state-funded services (HRS § 368-1.5).

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission supports HB2045, which designates Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea, or Sovereignty Restoration Day, as a state holiday in place of Statehood Day.

Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea is a day of historical and cultural significance in Hawai‘i. In 1843, unauthorized representatives of the British Crown seized control of the Hawaiian

Kingdom, lowered and burned Hawaiian flags, and held the islands under occupation for several months. Thanks to the efforts of King Kamehameha III and British Admiral Richard Thomas, sovereignty was restored, and the Hawaiian flag was raised at what is now Thomas Square in Honolulu. This event marked the first celebration of Lā Hoʻihoʻi Ea and affirmed the guiding proclamation, “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono,” commonly rendered as “The sovereignty of the Hawaiian nation is restored by righteousness.”

This observation is relevant to civil rights in Hawai‘i as it honors self-determination and the enduring struggle for justice and equality. It is also a chance to acknowledge all that was stolen from the Native Hawaiian people and to recognize the importance of identity. Each year, the community continues to honor this restoration on July 31 in Thomas Square. In 2022, Act 082 recognized Lā Hoʻihoʻi Ea by statute, and HB 2045 builds on that recognition by elevating the day to a state holiday.

Hawai‘i’s leadership in civil rights is rooted in Native Hawaiian values. These values include aloha, which guides us to show care and respect for all people. They include pono, which calls us to do what is right and just. They include kuleana, which reminds us that rights come with responsibility to one another and to our ‘āina. They include ea, which speaks to life, breath, and the sovereignty of a people. These values shape how Hawai‘i approaches civil rights, and they have helped make our state a national leader in protecting dignity, advancing fairness, and promoting inclusive governance.

This change will also honor the identity of Native Hawaiians whose illegal overthrow was formally acknowledged by the United States in 1993. It is a small but meaningful gesture to recognize the wrongs that have been done while celebrating a path forward rooted in justice and reconciliation.

As Derek Kauanoë has writtenⁱ, advancing human and civil rights in Hawai'i requires infusing Indigenous human rights principles with Kanaka Maoli values. This work is ongoing and essential to ensuring that our laws and policies reflect the cultural foundation that makes Hawai'i unique and just. HB 2045 aligns with that vision by elevating a day that symbolizes sovereignty, righteousness, and resilience.

Designating Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea as a state holiday will strengthen public understanding of this history and these values. It will honor the resilience of the Native Hawaiian people and affirm the principle that sovereignty and civil rights endure when we act with righteousness. It will also provide an annual opportunity for residents and visitors to learn, reflect, and recommit to justice.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission urges you to pass HB 2045. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

ⁱ Derek H. Kauanoë, *The Role of Human Rights in Advancing Justice for Native Hawaiians: Infusing Indigenous Human Rights with Kanaka Maoli Values*, 47 U. Haw. L. Rev. 77 (2024).

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA LIMAHANA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



NOLA N. MIYASAKI
DIRECTOR
PO'O

KAREN MILLER
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
KOKUA PO'O

February 12, 2026

The Honorable Jeanne Kapela, Chair
The Honorable Sam Satoru Kong, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Culture & Arts
The House of Representatives, Room 309
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: House Bill No. 2045
Relating to State Holidays

The Department of Human Resources, City and County of Honolulu, respectfully submits **comments** on the bill.

The City understands and appreciates the cultural symbolism of recognizing Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea, or Sovereignty Restoration Day. We note the matter will require negotiations with the various public unions through the collective bargaining process in order for public sector employees to have Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea replace Statehood Day as a holiday under the operative collective bargaining agreements.

We thank you for giving us the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nola N. Miyasaki". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Nola N. Miyasaki
Director



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2045
RELATING TO STATE HOLIDAYS

Ke Kōmike Hale of ka Mo‘omeheu a me Nā Hana
No‘eau
Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i

Pepeluali 13, 2026

9:15 AM

Lumi 309

Aloha e Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the House Committee on Culture and Arts:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB2045** which designates Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea as a state holiday.

Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea, or Sovereignty Restoration Day, commemorates the July 31, 1843 restoration of sovereignty to King Kamehameha III following the unlawful seizure of the Hawaiian Kingdom by representatives of the British Crown. In a ceremony in what is now Thomas Square, thousands of Hawaiian citizens of all ethnicities gathered to watch the raising of the Hawaiian flag.

Designating Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea as a state holiday acknowledges Hawai‘i’s unique history and the ongoing pursuit of justice and self-determination.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS HB2045**.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 11:06:29 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoeuluwehianuhea Case	Na Wai Ho'ola Nui La'au Lapa'au Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Honorable Members:

My name is Kanoeuluwehianuhea Case, Co-founder of Na Wai Ho'ola Nui La'au Lapa'au Foundation along with Founder Kuha'o Kawaauhau-Case. Our mission is to bring forth healing of our people through humble and intentional Aloha 'Āina Advocacy. 'O Mauna A Wakea no ku'u Mauna, 'O Waimea Moku 'O Keawe mai au.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB2045 to honor our people of Hawai'i, honor our history and our Culture to promote the healing of wounds that we still carry thru generations due to Cultural Erasure.

Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea should be honored as a State Holiday so our people can reconnect to who we are thus we can continue to heal individually and collectively.

This Bill supports Our Mission as Na Wai Ho'ola Nui La'au Lapa'au Foundations purpose is:

- To foster individual and collective healing grounded in the principles of Aloha 'Āina(love and care for the land).
- To promote cultural, spiritual, and environmental practices that restore balance and well-being.
- To serve as a community resource for education, healing programs, and sustainability initiatives.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

Kanoeuluwehianuhea Case

Moku O Keawe

Na Wai Ho'ola Nui La'au Lapa'au Foundation

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 1:34:55 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brissa Christophersen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2045 for state recognition of the Hawaiian holiday, Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea on July 31st in lieu of celebrating "Statehood day". Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea is important for us as Native Hawaiians because it reminds us of our history and perpetuates further learning into Hawaiian history before statehood. Let it be remembered the names of those ancestors on the Kū‘ē petitions that did not want annexation into the United States government, let alone Statehood. It is important that this event be marked and celebrated on July 31st.

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 4:43:06 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in support of this bill.

As mentioned in the Apology Resolution of 1993, the Kingdom of Hawaii was illegally overthrown by the United States. Acknowledging this fact, it would be best for the State of Hawaii to not recognize illegitimate holidays, such as when Hawaii became a state. Understanding that the overthrow of Hawaii was illegal, the resulting admission of Hawaii as the 50th state would also be illegitimate. Thus, replacing it with a legitimate event such as the Sovereignty Restoration Day, makes the most sense.

As captured in Section 1 of this bill, it is a meaningful day for the indigenous people of Hawaii, and given its historical context, should be honored by us today.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Keoni Shizuma

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:35:15 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Puhiale	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure relating to state holidays and the recognition of significant dates in Hawaiian history.

I support formally recognizing Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea in a meaningful way. Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea, commemorating the restoration of sovereignty to the Hawaiian Kingdom on July 31, 1843, represents a powerful historical moment. It reflects the restoration of ea, life, breath, and sovereignty, following the unlawful occupation by Lord George Paulet. It stands as a reminder of the resilience, diplomacy, and leadership of Kamehameha III. This day deserves continued public acknowledgment and deeper educational emphasis statewide.

At present, Lā Kū‘oko‘a, observed on November 28, is recognized as a non observance holiday, not an official state holiday. It commemorates the formal recognition of the Hawaiian Kingdom’s independence in 1843 by Great Britain and France and reflects Hawai‘i’s acknowledged status as a sovereign nation among international powers.

If the Legislature is considering designating Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea as an official state holiday in place of Statehood Day, then I respectfully recommend a different approach. If the policy intent is to replace the idea of Hawai‘i becoming a state with a holiday that reflects Hawaiian nationhood, then recognizing the date when the Hawaiian Kingdom was formally acknowledged by other international powers would be more aligned with that purpose.

In that case, Lā Kū‘oko‘a should be elevated to official state holiday status, and Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea could be designated as the non-observance holiday. Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea honors restoration of sovereignty. Lā Kū‘oko‘a commemorates internationally recognized independence. If we are replacing a statehood holiday, elevating the independence recognition holiday provides clearer historical symmetry.

Both days are significant and worthy of remembrance.

Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration.

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:36:30 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leinani Kaleihuia	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure concerning the recognition of Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea and traditional Hawaiian Kingdom holidays.

Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea holds deep historical meaning. July 31, 1843 marks the restoration of sovereignty to the Hawaiian Kingdom and gave rise to the enduring declaration, “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono.” It is an important moment in our history and deserves continued recognition and educational emphasis.

Currently, Lā Kū‘oko‘a, November 28, is recognized as a non observance holiday, not as an official state holiday. Lā Kū‘oko‘a commemorates the formal recognition of Hawaiian independence by Great Britain and France in 1843. It represents the Hawaiian Kingdom’s standing as an internationally recognized sovereign nation and historically was celebrated as a national independence day.

If the Legislature’s intent is to replace Statehood Day with a traditional Hawaiian Kingdom holiday, then the question becomes which historical moment most directly reflects that shift. If the goal is to move from commemorating Hawai‘i’s admission into the United States to commemorating Hawaiian sovereignty, then recognizing the day Hawai‘i was officially acknowledged by other international powers would be more consistent with that purpose.

For that reason, I respectfully recommend that if an official state holiday designation is to be made, Lā Kū‘oko‘a should be elevated to that status. Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea could appropriately serve as the non observance holiday. This approach preserves recognition of both significant events while aligning the official holiday with the moment of internationally recognized independence.

Mahalo for your leadership in carefully considering how Hawai‘i chooses to honor its history.

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:16:18 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristi Desaucido	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2045 to designate Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea, Sovereignty Restoration Day, as an official state holiday. Recognizing this day is an opportunity to restore dignity to a history that has too often been silenced or overlooked. Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea represents a pivotal moment when Hawaiian sovereignty was restored in 1843, affirming the resilience, leadership, and diplomatic strength of our ancestors.

For the next generation of keiki, making this day a state holiday reinforces a future rooted in truth, healing, and self-determination. It ensures that our youth grow up with access to their own history, not erased, but honored. It invites all Hawai‘i residents to reflect on the deeper meanings of ea—sovereignty, life, and the right to thrive in one’s homeland. Passing this bill would be a meaningful step toward building a more pono future, grounded in justice and cultural reclamation.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:36:40 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Ing	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

11 February 2026

To: Aloha Chair and Members of the House Committee

Subject: In STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2045

Aloha kākou! I am a kumu ‘Ōiwi and am testifying in favor of House Bill 2045. I am in support of this bill because the process to vote for statehood was illegal and unethical; the majority of Kānaka were never in favor of statehood; and if our kūpuna opposed annexation in 1897, then we would never have supported statehood in 1954, and we will not support it in 2026, 2050 or ever.

La Hoihoi Ea is the day we celebrate the return of our ea or sovereignty, and in order to progress toward greater ea, we need to begin to stop recognizing statehood day, talk about the injustices that were part of that process, and support Kānaka as we seek ea, aloha our ‘āina, and restore that which was taken away.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT for HB 2045.

Tiffany Lani Ing

Mānoa, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:39:15 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hokukuanalia P Sunia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Aloha mai kākou. My name is Hokukuanalia Sunia, and I am testifying in **STRONG support of HB 2045**, to designate Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea—Sovereignty Restoration Day—as an official state holiday.

I strongly support this measure because recognizing Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea is more than symbolic; it is an act of restoring dignity to a history that has too often been silenced or minimized. Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea marks the pivotal moment in 1843 when Hawaiian sovereignty was restored, affirming the resilience, leadership, and diplomatic strength of our ali‘i and ancestors. It is a day that reminds us that ea—sovereignty, life, breath—was taken and then returned, and that our people have long fought to protect it.

Designating this day as a state holiday matters deeply for both our current generation and those yet to come. For us now, it creates space for reflection, education, and collective understanding of Hawai‘i’s true history. It acknowledges historical truths that continue to shape present-day realities. For future generations, it ensures that this history is not forgotten or erased, but honored as an essential part of who we are as a people and as a state.

Establishing Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea as an official holiday invites all residents of Hawai‘i to engage with the meaning of ea—the right of a people to self-determination and to thrive in their homeland. It is a step toward healing, accountability, and cultural reclamation. Recognizing this day affirms that our state values truth, justice, and the preservation of Native Hawaiian history and identity.

In closing, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB 2045. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to serving the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui loa,

Hokukuanalia Sunia

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:40:25 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zaira-Marley Meleana Marcellino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

11 February 2026

Aloha Chair and Members of the House Committee,

SUBJECT: In STRONG Support of HB 2045

Aloha, ‘O wau o Zaira Marcellino. I am a senior at Hālau Kū Māna, and I am testifying in strong support of HB 2045.

Learning about Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea has deeply shaped who I am as a Native Hawaiian student. In 1843, when the Hawaiian Kingdom was illegally occupied and our flag was lowered and burned, our people experienced fear and injustice. But months later, our sovereignty was peacefully restored. When the Hawaiian flag was raised again at Thomas Square, it showed the world that our nation still stood. That moment represents hope, strength, and resilience.

King Kamehameha III declared, “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono.” To me, those words are not just the state motto. They mean that our life, our sovereignty, and our identity continue when we stand in righteousness. As a young Hawaiian, those words remind me that despite everything our people have faced, we are still here. Our culture lives. Our language lives. Our ea lives.

Replacing Statehood Day with Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea is not about erasing history. It is about honoring a part of our history that reflects restoration, pride, and the strength of our lāhui. Recognizing this day as a state holiday would show students like me that our history and our identity matter.

HB 2045 would create space for education, reflection, and healing. It would honor our kūpuna and inspire future generations to carry forward the values of ea and pono.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I respectfully urge you to pass HB 2045.

Mahalo nui loa,

Zaira Marcellino

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:42:05 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harue Kyota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

O wau ‘o Pililani Kyota, no Makiki. I am a senior at Hālau Kū Māna Public Charter School. At my school, I get to experience first-hand the ‘ike our kūpuna, learn ‘ōlelo hawai‘i, practice mālama ‘āina, and engage in cultural activities like hula and community projects. Every day, I see how the values of ‘ohana, pono, and aloha ‘āina guide the way we learn and interact.

I strongly support HB 2045 to replace Statehood Day with La Hoihoi Ea. This day honors the restoration of Hawaiian sovereignty in 1843 and reminds us of the resilience, courage, and strength of our lāhui. While Statehood Day marks Hawai‘i’s annexation into the United States, La Hoihoi Ea centers our history, culture, and identity as kanaka maoli. For me personally, celebrating La Hoihoi Ea would make history alive—it connects what I learn in school to the land, the people, and our ongoing journey as a community. It gives all keiki a chance to remember our mo‘olelo, honor our kūpuna, and carry forward the values that make Hawai‘i unique.

Mahalo nui,

Pililani Kyota

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:46:44 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darren Yamabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 2045. Renaming the Statehood holiday to Lā Ho‘i Ho‘i Ea will keep in the minds of all Hawaii residents that the overthrow was illegal and all who were born here and consider Hawai‘i to be their home have a right to self-determination.

Darren

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 5:32:33 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honoring and recognizing this important day in our history will encourage folks to learn about what led up to Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea. i only learned of the entire situation within the last 10 years. i am 77 years old, and never learned anything in elementary thru high school in regard to the Real History of Hawai‘i. Western education does not teach the Facts about how the United States treated the indigenous peoples of all places USA now occupies. Facts are facts - and not acknowledging them, doesn‘t change them. Use your power to share the information. Mahalo to those who introduced this bill. Eō

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 7:57:59 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Makayla Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Makayla Holt and I am writing in support of HB 2045 to replace statehood day with Lā ho‘iho‘i Ea.

Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea marks July 31,1843 the day the hawaiian kingdom’s sovereignty was restored. This moment in history reflects resilience, justice, and independence of Hawai‘i. It is a powerful reminder that Hawai‘i was once a recognized sovereign nation with its own government, laws and international relationships.

Statehood Day does not represent all people of Hawai‘i equally. For many hawaiiians, statehood is connected to the illegal overthrow of the hawaiian kingdom in 1893 and the loss of our nation. Continuing to celebrate statehood day can feel like celebrating the loss of hawaiian sovereignty and identity. Replacing it with Lā ho‘iho‘i Ea would be a step in the right direction

To acknowledge our true history.

Recognizing Lā ho‘iho‘i ea as a state holiday would create opportunities for education and reflection. It would encourage conversations about sovereignty, justice and the importance of caring for our ‘āina and our people. This change would not erase history but strengthen our understanding of it. It would also encourage schools,communities to learn about hawaiian history more deeply and honestly.

HB 2045 represents an opportunity to honor the truth. I respectfully urge you to support this bill and stand for a holiday that uplifts restoration and the continued pursuit of ea for our lāhui.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify

Sincerely,

Makayla Kaleikaumaka Holt

HB2045

In Favor

This is a dream that our ancestors have always wanted, a dream that was once a reality long before our beloved kingdom was overthrown. Why should we celebrate a holiday that is founded by the shed of Kānaka Māoli blood, a holiday founded by money hungry men, who wanted nothing but the resources of our mother land. The passing of this bill would mean breaking the chains of grief, healing generational wounds, and taking a step against the decolonization of Hawai'i. It is with great respect, and great honor that I have an opportunity to share my thoughts on this bill. I hope that the older and newer generations have an opportunity to witness a time like this, a dream that our ancestors have always wanted, which is the ability to celebrate our traditional holidays without the judgement foreign eyes. To regain our strength, our mana, our Hawai'i nei.

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:06:45 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Akari Takayanagi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB 2045: Relating to State Holidays

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Akari Takayanagi and I am a resident of Honolulu. I am writing in support of HB 2045, which would replace the Statehood Day with Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea as an official state holiday.

Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea began in 1843 under King Kamehameha III, after the Hawaiian Kingdom was temporarily taken over by the British Lord George Paulet. During that time, Hawaiian flags were lowered and burned, and control of the government was taken away. Months later, Queen Victoria of Great Britain sent Admiral Richard Thomas to fix the situation. On July 31, 1843, a large ceremony was held at what is now Thomas square, and thousands of Hawaiian citizens had attended. The British flag was lowered and the Hawaiian flag was raised once again. This marked the return of Hawaiian sovereignty.

On that day, King Kamehameha III said “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono” which means “The sovereignty of the kingdom continues because we are righteous”, and is now the state motto. After this event, Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea became one of the first national holidays of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

Over time this important national holiday was no longer widely recognized. When Hawai‘i became a state in 1959, Statehood Day became the main holiday, replacing Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea. While statehood is part of our history, it came more than 100 years after Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea. Replacing Statehood Day with Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea would recognize Hawai‘i’s earlier history as an independent and sovereign nation.

Passing HB 2045 would also have important benefits today, and moving forward:

- **Restoring recognition of Hawaiian sovereignty:** Officially honoring Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea acknowledges Hawai‘i’s history as an independent, self-governing nation, not just as a U.S. state. This is a chance to honor the resilience and leadership of Native Hawaiians.
- **Educating the public and students:** Making Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea a state holiday encourages schools and communities to teach about Hawaiian sovereignty, the Paulet Affair, and

Kamehameha III's leadership. This helps future generations understand the deeper history of Hawai'i.

- **Acknowledging Hawaiian culture and values:** The holiday celebrates justice, restoration, and ea. It gives cultural recognition to Native Hawaiians and reinforces pride in Hawai'i's unique heritage
- **Helping people reflect on Hawai'i's history:** Unlike Statehood Day, which celebrates a political change imposed from outside, Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea highlights Hawai'i's own achievements in diplomacy and governance. It encourages residents to reflect on values like justice, resilience, and self-determination.

HB 2045 does not erase history. Instead, it restores recognition to an important event that shaped Hawai'i's identity and values. Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea reminds us of justice, restoration, and the meaning of ea. Making it a state holiday would help educate future generations and honor Hawai'i's unique history.

For these reasons, I respectfully request you to support and pass HB 2045.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Akari Takayanagi

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:13:19 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mai Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it is the pono thing to do. We should be celebrating Hawaii and our Hawaiian culture

To: Representative Jeanne Kapela, Chair
Representative Sam Satoru Kong, Vice Chair
Committee on Culture & Arts

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 12, 2026

RE: House Bill 2045
Measure Title: RELATING TO STATE HOLIDAYS.
Report Title: State Holidays; La Hoihoi Ea; Statehood Day

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 2045. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:05:18 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Olderr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it honors the rich history of Hawai'i and recognizes the injustices that were inflicted against it.

Aloha to the committee chair and members,

My name is Kanoelani Kepka. I am a resident of Waianae and a sophomore at Kamaile Academy, a Hawaiian-focused public charter school. I am here in support of HB-2045, which proposes to make Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea, Sovereignty Restoration Day, a state holiday in place of Statehood Day.

To some people, this proposal might just look like a simple bill and nothing important. But to me, and many others, it is much more than that. This is a bill that will make history. It solidifies Hawaiian sovereignty for Kanaka Maoli, the people of Hawai‘i, and our kupuna who came before. Recognizing Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea as a state holiday honors and respects the history and the events that shaped us today. It honors the struggles and the lives lost, but it also honors the celebrations, such as Lā Kū‘oko‘a on November 22, 1843, where Hawai‘i was recognized internationally as an independent sovereign nation. These moments matter, both the good and the bad, should be remembered and honored because that is how our history stays alive and thriving.

By passing this bill, it will move Hawai‘i one step closer to restoring our independence as a kingdom and nation. We should remove Statehood Day as an official state holiday because why are we “celebrating” the day we illegally became a state? Why are we reinstating the power they took from our lāhui? Replacing it with Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea gives our people the opportunity to honor and reclaim our history and pride in who we are as a Kingdom.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kanoelani Kepka

Testimony in Support of HB2045

Aloha to the committee chair and members. My name is Charlie Alexandra Bayno, I am and have been for quite some time now a resident of Waianae. I am writing to strongly support HB2045, which proposes to replace Statehood day on July 31 as La Hoihoi Ea (Sovereignty Restoration Day), as a state holiday.

Since my time here in Hawai'i, I have learned many things about the culture, practices, and most importantly, its history. As a student at Kamaile Academy, a Hawaiian public charter school, honoring the significance of our history is common. I'm sure every other student, and as well as the people of Hawai'i come on the same terms as me. Celebrating our history isn't just for honor. It is to remember the resilience our kupuna fought for. How they reacted and successfully retaliated against challenges they faced, and the harsh reality they had to confront when things went south. We celebrate the efforts and accomplishments that we have made as a whole. Whether it's getting recognized as a nation on November 28, 1843, or getting overthrown as a nation on January 17, 1893. As the people of our 'aina, La Hoihoi Ea is one of the many days we celebrate that help spread awareness of the events that have affected our sovereignty. The history that they don't teach in our kula. To keep our culture thriving, we must do the same for our history.

La Hoihoi Ea carries our kupunas identities and continues to develop ours. The history that it carries contains our culture. The culture that builds our identity. Making La Ho'ihoi Ea an official state holiday would bring us closer to our actual history, and what should've been the conclusion for our islands. "A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia." No task is too big when done together by all. With all our voices together we can recognize an important day to all of Hawai'i. I am humbly requesting your voice to support HB2045 in order to further our progress in restoring our sovereign nation that was illegally stripped from us. Thank you for your time today, and I hope you consider the people that stand with me.

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:12:02 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian H Shimabukuro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, My Name is Brian Shimabukuro, I would like to testify in support of HB 2045 proposing to observe :a Ho`iho`i Ea in plaace of Admissions Day. La Ho`iho`i Ea was an National Holiday of the Hawaiian Kingdom. It was discontinued to be celebrated following the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom celebrating the return of their sovereign independence by a republic/nation that in all eventuality led to statehood which we presently celebrate with a holiday. The holiday would be a recognition/mourning of social injustice that was reconciled in contrast with a social injustice unresolved. This holiday would aknowledge the disenfranchisement of Hawaiian citizens for over 130 years.

Mahalo,

Brian Shimabukuro

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 12:08:44 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Abby Simmons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and esteemed Members of the Committee,

I'm testifying in strong support of HB2045. Its past due that we pass this measure. Thank you to all the legislators who have sponsored this bill.

Please pass this bill out of Committee.

Abby Simmons

Hawaii Island

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 1:52:25 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chachie Abara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Satoru Kong and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in favor of supporting HB 2045 State Holidays; La Hoihoi Ea; Statehood Day to be approved by the committee. I feel like this is a long time coming bill and it deserves to be recognize and acknowledge by the public.

Aloha olua,

"La Hoihoi Ea o ka aina". In 1863, this statement appeared in the newspaper Ka Nupepa Kuokoa, in reference to the celebrated day of La Hoihoi Ea, 1843. This is considered one of the most important days to Hawaiians and the kanaka of this land. For 183 years this has been a National Holiday in Hawaii! This day is deeply rooted in Hawaiian pride and the history of Hawaii. This is a day when the people and the Mo'i Kane Kauikeaouli of Hawaii decided, we are a people that deserve dignity and independence in the eyes of the rest of the world. For centuries Hawaiians held this dignity and independence throughout the archipelago. However it was not until settler, colonizers from Europe, Asia, and America invaded Hawaii and attempted to steal this dignity and independence by military force. This attempted violent take over of 1843, aimed at stealing the culture and sovereignty from Hawaiians, labeled the Paulet Affair, brought this act of savagery of foreigners to light. However, as history has shown, the lack of benevolent behavior of foreigners continues to this day in Hawaii. All one needs to do is look at the United States Census, 21% of the current population of Hawaii is Native Hawaiian. The stolen land, stolen government, forced migration and cultural genocide of Hawaiians has yet to be curtailed in the ethical direction towards justice. If the current legislature of Hawaii wants to try and undo some of the wrongs committed intentionally towards Native Hawaiians, it is my ask to make La Hoihoi Ea a state celebrated holiday once again.

To celebrate La Hoihoi Ea means to celebrate what makes Hawaii a place of significance. To every person in Hawaii or to millions around the world, the most significant defining characteristic of Hawaii is ALOHA. Aloha is to live a life with caring, love, compassion, selflessness, and deep connection with the aina. All these universal characteristics which define aloha are the deeply held emotions why Hawaiians want and know they deserve independence and respect. It is a culture and attitude worth celebrating. At this moment in time, I cannot see a better medicine than celebrated aloha for Hawaii and the world.

*Aloha no,
Kumu Pekelo Richmond
Pepeluai 2, 2026
Puumaka'a, Ka'u
kumupilikanka@gmail.com*

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:34:58 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha all,

I wish I could take time to testify on zoom but my schedule does not allow me to do that. Please know that I very strongly support this measure and hope you will consider replacing Statehood Day with Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea. I have long felt that Statehood day was an inappropriate day reason for a holiday. Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea feels much more what a State of Hawai'i holiday should be.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Stacey Moniz
Pukalani, Maui

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 4:51:42 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Summer P Noland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support removing "admissions day" in exchange for Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea. This should be a state holiday and the truth of this holiday should be celebrated by all.

Mahalo

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 5:11:42 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members,

I Strongly **SUPPORT** HB 2045 which designates La Hoihoi Ea, Sovereignty Restoration Day, as a state holiday in place of Statehood Day. This day has been a part of Hawaiian history and has been celebrated since 1843. It is part of the foundation of this place. By this bill, the State of Hawaii acknowledges and understands the importance of this day.

There will no doubt be disagreement for taking the "state" hood day away as a state holiday. It will most likely bring up all the conversations heard throughout any time we stand for what is pono based on the history of this place and for the people of this place.

Reasons to change to La Hoi Hoi Ea: cultural significance, historical accuracy and it's time that formal recognition of Governor Ige's signature in 2022 on bill HB 2475 occur.

La Hoi Hoi Ea is more than a "day of remembrance" . It is a one of the two most important days for Hawaiians.

Let's make La Hoi Hoi Ea an official holiday of the State. Admission day can be the "remembered" day for those who want to remember the ways these islands "became" a US State.

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:11:18 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kekupuohaoha Loo-Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

10 February 2026

TO: Aloha Chair and Members of the House Committee

Subject: In STRONG support of HB 2045

I'm testifying in favor of HB 2045. The reason is simple: Hawai'i is not a legal state of the U. S. Hawai'i is the longest military occupied land in the world and celebrating a holiday that celebrates a fake state doesn't abide by international law. Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea is a Hawaiian holiday that celebrates the return of the kingdom from Britain.

The legislature has a lot of power to educate people on Lā Ho'ihō'i whether people agree or not. If more people know about this holiday the more people will speak up in favor of it or not. It's more important to educate people so that they can make their own decisions. I've made my own decision on this, which is that Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea should be recognized as a holiday more than a day celebrating a fake state.

Kekupu Loo-Ching

Kaimukī, O'ahu, Hawai'i

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:34:36 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:38:35 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Marquez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

I appreciate HB 2045. Its time to recognize Hawai'i as a sovereign state. Hawai's sovereignty was restored on July 31, 1843. It would be a pono act to recognize our Hawaiian holiday in place of Statehood day. I humbly ask you to SUPPORT HB 2045. Mahalo for your time.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Malia Marquez

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:41:41 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zahava Zaidoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and the members of the Culture and Arts committee,

My name is Zahava "Zee" Zaidoff and I am testifying in strong support of this measure.

As a Hawai'i resident who has been living here for over a decade, I fully support the perpetuation of Native Hawaiian culture, history, sovereignty, and justice.

I feel incredibly honored to have been welcomed to this land - land that is not mine. I have had many opportunities to learn and contribute to my hanai home.

The Native Hawaiian caucus introduced this bill. With the trauma of the past and the continued trauma that kanaka maoli live with and fight against, I will use my voice to ally up with any and all issues that are important.

Mahalo for moving this bill forward and honoring the Hawaiian culture, while simultaneously helping to erase the yearly reminder of trauma.

Mahalo nui!

Zahava "Zee" Zaidoff

Ocean View, Hi

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:34:49 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Matson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Our 'ohana is in strong support of this bill. E ola ka maoli Hawai'i!

If you need further justification for passing this measure please read the 1993 Joint Resolution offering apology to the Hawaiian people for the illegal overthrow of their Queen and government.

Mahalo,

'Ohana Matson

Hawai'i Island

Aloha olua,

“La Hoihoi Ea o ka aina”. In 1863, this statement appeared in the newspaper Ka Nupepa Kuokoa, in reference to the celebrated day of La Hoihoi Ea, 1843. This is considered one of the most important days to Hawaiians and the kanaka of this land. For 183 years this has been a National Holiday in Hawaii! This day is deeply rooted in Hawaiian pride and the history of Hawaii. This is a day when the people and the Mo‘i Kane Kaiuikaouli of Hawaii decided, we are a people that deserve dignity and independence in the eyes of the rest of the world. For centuries Hawaiians held this dignity and independence throughout the archipelago. However it was not until settler, colonizers from Europe, Asia, and America invaded Hawaii and attempted to steal this dignity and independence by military force. This attempted violent take over of 1843, aimed at stealing the culture and sovereignty from Hawaiians, labeled the Paulet Affair, brought this act of savagery of foreigners to light. However, as history has shown, the lack of benevolent behavior of foreigners continues to this day in Hawaii. All one needs to do is look at the United States Census, 21% of the current population of Hawaii is Native Hawaiian. The stolen land, stolen government, forced migration and cultural genocide of Hawaiians has yet to be curtailed in the ethical direction towards justice. If the current legislature of Hawaii wants to try and undo some of the wrongs committed intentionally towards Native Hawaiians, it is my ask to make La Hoihoi Ea a state celebrated holiday once again.

To celebrate La Hoihoi Ea means to celebrate what makes Hawaii a place of significance. To every person in Hawaii or to millions around the world, the most significant defining characteristic of Hawaii is ALOHA. Aloha is to live a life with caring, love, compassion, selflessness, and deep connection with the aina. All these universal characteristics which define aloha are the deeply held emotions why Hawaiians want and know they deserve independence and respect. It is a culture and attitude worth celebrating. At this moment in time, I cannot see a better medicine than celebrated aloha for Hawaii and the world.

*Aloha no,
Kumu Pekelo Richmond
Pepeluai 2, 2026
Puumaka‘a, Ka‘u
kumupilikanka@gmail.com*

HB-2045

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 7:17:15 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/13/2026 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Kailiawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

My name is *Leilani Kailiawa*, and I am submitting testimony **in strong support of HB 2045**, which designates *La Hoihoi Ea, Sovereignty Restoration Day* as a state holiday in place of *Statehood Day*.

I support this bill because it recognizes and honors an important chapter in Hawai‘i’s history — the restoration of sovereignty in 1843 — that predates statehood and holds deep cultural significance for many in our community. Designating *La Hoihoi Ea* as a state holiday acknowledges the resilience, heritage, and contributions of Native Hawaiians and ensures that Hawai‘i’s full history is represented in our calendar.

This measure strengthens our collective understanding of Hawai‘i’s identity and promotes a respect for cultural heritage that benefits all residents and visitors. I respectfully urge the committees to **pass HB 2045** and help our state celebrate a holiday that reflects the spirit and history of aloha ‘āina.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,
Leilani Kailiawa