

# L A T E

**To: The Committees on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs and Health Issues**

**Re: HB2887 HD2 Relating to Traditional Hawaiian Tattooing**

**Date: 3/19/08 at 1:15 pm Rm.016**

Aloha Honorable Chair Senator Tokuda, Vice Chair Senator English, Chair Senator Ige, and Vice Chair Senator Fukunaga

My name is Debbie Neuman and I am a resident of Makaha, an educator for twenty years and the project director at Na Maka Walu, a nonprofit organization based in Waianae.

I am writing to you in support of HB2887 HD2 relating to traditional tattooing. As a native Hawaiian, I feel strongly that our practitioners be allowed to perform their traditional & cultural practices based on the Constitution of the United States, which guarantees us our inalienable rights.

As indigenous people, with a proud and definite culture, with its own protocols and practices, I wholeheartedly believe that our traditional art of Hawaiian tattooing should be performed by a Kahuna kakau, and that no State agency should have jurisdiction over deeming this practitioner competent. The kupuna and elders are the only ones qualified to pass on such sacred knowledge and adherence to the proper protocols should be done in the traditional manner.

I strongly urge your committees to support this bill knowing that the clients that these Kahuna kakau will be serving, definitely will not be checking for Department of Health certificates and approvals, but rather traditional verification of competency based on genealogy and inherent native rights and responsibilities.

Mahalo nui for your consideration and sensitivity to the native rights of our Hawaiian people.

Debbie Neuman  
Na Maka Walu, Inc.  
277-7931

3/19/2008

L A T E

Aloha Kakou,

My name is Keone Nunes, I would have submitted this testimony in person but a prior commitment on the continental U.S. does not allow me to. I am a traditional practitioner of *uhi Hawai'i*, Hawaiian tattooing and fully support HB 2887 HD2.

The practice of uhi has been an important part of the Hawaiian culture from when the first Polynesians settled in these islands of Hawai'i. The practice survived thousands of years and should be allowed to survive in the same cultural context for our future generations. In it's traditional form uhi in the application and protocol is very different than the contemporary western practice and its' difference should be recognized.

As a practitioner it is our responsibility to look after both the spiritual and physical well being of the people that we work on and to this point we have addressed the concerns of contemporary transmission of blood born pathogens and have developed protocols for the proper sterilization of traditional tools. These protocols have been the foundation of the standards adopted by the Manukau City Council of Auckland, Aotearoa, (New Zealand). The traditional protocols that take care of the spiritual aspect of the uhi has always been utilized in our practices.

I feel that it is imperative that this and other traditional cultural practices should be supported, and reaffirm my commitment to the practice of uhi and to this legislative process.

Aloha

Keone Nunes

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