

LATE

HCR 108

URGING THE STATE OF HAWAII TO CHANGE THE STREET NAME OF FORT BARRETTE ROAD TO KUALAKA'I ROAD

Good afternoon Chair English, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard, committee members, guests and friends. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. My name is Rockne Freitas, a native Hawaiian. I want to speak in support of HCR 108.

It is important that the history of these islands be preserved in its place names. It is in the ancient names that we can understand our historical past. Our stories and history can be found in the oral traditions by these names. We went through a generation of denial perhaps through the good intentions of our parents. It is our responsibility today to reconnect the ancient past with the generation of our children. Our children will only be able to grow, become successful and contributing members of Hawaii if they have a clear sense of cultural identity.

This an effort to restore the name of Kualaka'i that was once a trail connecting Pu'uokapolei with the coastal community of Kualaka'i. The name of Kualaka'i appears on Malden's Map of 1825. The Navy changed the place name of Kualaka'i to Nimitz Beach in the former Naval Air Station at Barbers Point.. As recent as the early 1900s and later part of the 1800s people were still living at Kualaka'i and paying taxes. Kualaka'i was the place the Tahitian Chief Kaha'i-a-Ho'okamali'i planted the first breadfruit tree symbolically connecting the people of O'ahu to their ancestral lands.....Tahiti and Samoa. The Ulu tree he planted came from Samoa by way of Tahiti. The motif of the Ulu Leaf symbolically represents rebirth or a new life.

The name Kualaka'i comes from the corruption of "Ka Ulu 'O Kaha'I" or the "the Ulu Tree of Kaha'i". Kaha'i 's full name was Kaha'i-a-Ho'okamali'i. He was the son of Moikeha and the great-grandson of Maweke who was one of the world's greatest explorers.

Anthropologist Marion Kelley refers to 'Ewa as the "Celebrated Lands of our Ancestors". She is referring to our Tahitian origins. The Pele Family, Kane and Kanaloa all have Tahitian roots. 'Ewa's story is rooted in our voyaging traditions.

In the story of Pele and Hiiaka, Hiiaka walked along the Kualaka'i Trail when she walked from Pu'uokapolei through Kaupe'a and Kanehili to Kualaka'i where she admired her reflection in the "Spring of Hoakalei". In the Travels of Kane and Kaneloa, Kane brought forth water from the sinkholes with the strike of his Ko'oko'o. We would not know these stories if it were not for these ancient place names. These are true stories not myths.

It is important to understand that Hawaii's history is as diverse as the many faces of our children. Hawaii's history is well over 1000 years old. It did not start with Captain Cook, it did not start with the missionaries, it did not start with the plantation era and it did not start with the military. It is all of these. It is important that our children understand that we here in Hawaii have a long and colorful history that we can all feel proud of.

I also want to make it clear that our support of this resolution not be considered in any way disrespectful of the contributions of our armed forces. We in Hawaii are grateful of the sacrifices made by the men and women in uniform. Many of our men and women in Hawaii have also served and made that final sacrifice in battle. Brig. General John Barrette's name is still memorialized in the Fort that carries his name. We are talking about a road that also carries his name only because of its close proximity to Fort Barrette.

We are no longer an agricultural State. More than ever our economy depends on our cultural history. Pearl Harbor will serve as that travel destination for our military past not Kapolei.

I urge your committee to support HCR 108 to change the street name of Ft. Barrette Road to Kualaka'i Road.....Mahalo