



LATE TESTIMONY

**HCR 126**

**REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS TO WORK WITH THE  
HAWAI'INUIAKEA SCHOOL OF HAWAIIAN KNOWLEDGE OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO DEVELOP A KUPUNA HONORARY DEGREE  
PROGRAM.**

House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Date: April 1, 2009  
Room: 329

Time: 9:30am

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) supports this resolution with amendments. First, as stated in previous testimony (HB 1796), the selection of the name, "Pöhaku Award", is premature and deprives the kōmike kupuna from coming up with a name. Second, OHA requests that the resolution specify that its Education Division be assigned to working with Hawai'inuiākea: School of Hawaiian Knowledge as it already has a good working relationship and open lines of communication.

As a point of information, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs awarded a Kūpuna Award for several years under the direction of Kupuna Elizabeth Jenkins or "Aunty Betty" as she is affectionately called. While this was not an honorary degree, it was a degree of honor.

Moreover, such a program should not be limited to confirmation by an institution of higher education. Tribes and other indigenous groups in the United States already confer honorary degrees. Indeed, the title, kumu hula, as bestowed on Kumu Hula Keliyi Tauyā, is an example of such a degree indicating mastery of Hawaiian knowledge and attainment in the art of hula.

Mahalo for this opportunity. We urge the adoption of this resolution.