

Rep. Maile Shimabukuro

From: Michael Odegaard [modegaard@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2009 5:50 AM
To: HAWtestimony
Subject: Testimony for 9:00 a.m. hearing of HAW on 3-18-09 for SB 579 (Relating to the Hawaiian Language)

To: Rep. Mele Carroll, Chair

From: Michael E. Malulani K. Odegaard, founder of Hawai'i Bilingual

RE: Testimony to the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs 3-18-09 Hearing in support of striking Section 5 from S.D. 2

LATE TESTIMONY

Welina mai Honorable Representatives!

I was shocked to read Comptroller Saito's 2-27-09 WAM testimony saying that actual implementation of the use of the State of Hawaii's two official languages is "impractical." Where does he derive the authority to make such a determination of values? It certainly doesn't rest with the people! Without exception, every citizen of Hawai'i that I have spoken with has told me that they would gladly pay a dollar to ensure that the State makes its publications available in the Hawaiian language, and my recent experience with the State Democratic Party Platform committee to promote increased bilingual services confirms the same. Moreover, President Obama has endorsed bilingualism; could his administration's support amount to even a dime per capita?

So I ask each of you: Why delay until 2050 what should have been standard procedure since 1898 or 1959? Please remember that the vision of Hawai'i's Constitution and united future is bilingual! Will your policy reflect that vision? By your decision on this very important matter, will you perpetuate the white supremacist tradition of cultural genocide or will you take the path of the more enlightened bilingual states in America, Canada, Mexico, Japan, The Philippines, India, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Malaysia, Singapore, Morocco, Paraguay, who value their indigenous languages? Indeed, since the United Nations' 2007 adoption of the International Declaration of Indigenous Rights, we are now without excuse!

If you agree with the Comptroller, then how do you expect those of us who teach the thousands of cherished Hawaiian immersion school children to break the news to them that the people who run our State government are against them? Please, I urge you to implement this act in 2011 as originally conceived!

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael E. Malulani K. Odegaard