



SB 2378 SD 2
RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
House Committee on Judiciary

March 18, 2010

2:45 p.m.

Room: 325

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following comments on SB 2378, SD 2. This bill would provide for the election of the members of the OHA Board of Trustees through a system of primary and general elections to begin with the 2014 elections. Currently, the trustees are elected at a special election held in conjunction with the general election.

We respectfully request that in weighing the pros and cons of this bill, you take into account the financial and other costs to the state and to the candidates for trustee. For the state, the costs include the administrative expenses of shifting to a different system for electing the trustees, including the costs of printing an OHA primary election ballot. Furthermore, implementation of the bill would put additional strain on the State Office of Elections, at a time when that office continues to struggle, financially and otherwise, with implementing existing election laws, at a time when state finances are in a precarious condition. For the candidates, the costs include the added expense of competing in two elections instead of one. The distinction of running state-wide for OHA trustee (similar to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and two U.S. Senators) makes the costs even more prohibitive. Increased candidate costs can have a chilling effect on those candidates or potential candidates who lack significant financial support.

We are also deeply concerned about the timing of this bill. The bill would require OHA to cope with the transition to a new OHA election system at a critical juncture when OHA will also be heavily involved in facilitating the transition to a new Native Hawaiian governing entity with the anticipated enactment of the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act.

We recommend that the Legislative Reference Bureau conduct a study of the financial and other costs and benefits of the proposed new election system to both the OHA candidates and the state. Such a study would enable the Legislature to more systematically determine whether the new system is advisable.

karamatsu1-Kenji

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 2010 12:29 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: almurak67@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2378 on 3/18/2010 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for JUD 3/18/2010 2:45:00 PM SB2378

Conference room: 325
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Alan t. Murakami
Organization: Individual
Address: 916D Auloa Road Kailua, HI
Phone: 808-721-3070
E-mail: almurak67@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/17/2010

Comments:

Please pass this bill to stop discrimination against OHA in elections.

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Chair
Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair

Testimony against passage of SB 2378, SD2 RELATING TO THE OFFICE
OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS.

Dear committee members this bill, to set up a primary and general election for the OHA Trustees does not attack the problem. As in the last three elections the island of Oahu residents virtually elects all of the OHA Trustees. The OHA Election should give a true voice to the Neighbor Islanders by letting them vote for their island trustee. There is precedence as the original OHA vote was by island thus bringing truly democratic representation to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Considering the low voter turn out, the financial malfeasance "as described in the states auditor's last three reports", and the legality of lobbying congress with state and beneficiary revenues to establish a Native Hawaiian Governing Entity, which ultimately would then replace OHA and absorb its assets, this committee should be focusing more on effectiveness to the constituents by way of a more democratic election process and financial oversight so that revenues paid to OHA are as described in the states constitution met with due diligence and fairness.

Respectfully
Kealii Makekau
2563 date st 312
Honolulu Hi, 96826

karamatsu1-Kenji

From: Derek Kauanoe [dkauanoe@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 18, 2010 8:06 AM
To: JUDtestimony
Subject: SB 2378 SD2 - meeting 3/18/2010 - Room 325 JUD

Aloha Mister Chair Representative Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice-Chair Representative Ken Ito, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

As a Native Hawaiian who votes in the elections for Trustees to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, I urge you to pass SB 2378 SD2 and consider amending the the compliance date to January 1, 2012

By providing for primary and general elections for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs ("OHA") Trustees, SB 2378 SD2 provides a greater type of self-governance among Native Hawaiians while still within the State of Hawaii and U.S. legal systems. This is accomplished with no substantive impact on the broader community.

Providing primary elections for OHA trustees also recognizes the importance of OHA's public elections by providing the same process for electing officials as other state and county elections. As a result, the OHA elections will become just as democratic as all other public office elections.

The opportunity for voters to narrow down to two candidates for each OHA Trustee position from a larger pool of candidates is a vitally important one. I urge to pass SB 2378 SD2 and to seriously consider amending the compliance date to January 1, 2012

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Derek H Kauanoe