

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2071 RELATING TO GOLD STAR FAMILY DAY
PRESENTATION TO THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS,
& CULTURE AND THE ARTS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN
DIRECTOR OF THE STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

February 5, 2014

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito and Committee members:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of the concepts in House Bill 2071, Relating to Gold Star Family Day.

This measure designates the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Family Day".

As the director for the State Office of Veterans Services, we join our Gold Star families in recognizing the last Sunday of September as "Gold Star Family Day". Being one of the caretakers of our veterans' cemeteries statewide, and especially at our Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery in Kaneohe, I deeply and wholeheartedly feel for these family members who have lost their sons and daughters in America's wars to preserve our freedoms that we enjoy today. Designating this "Gold Star Family Day" is a befitting honor to those who have given selflessly to their Nation and its citizenry and to their loved ones who remain.

I strongly recommend that the State of Hawaii support HB 2071 for the benefit of our Gold Star Families and the legacy of service of their loved ones lost in combat.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families in support of HB 2071.



ONLINE SUBMITTAL

Hearing on: Wednesday, February 5, 2014 @ 8:30 a.m..
Conference Room #312

DATE: February 4, 2014

TO: House Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs
Rep. K. Mark Takai, Chair
Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair

FROM: Eva Andrade, Executive Director

RE: Strong Support for HB 2071 Relating to Gold Star Family Day

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii, representing a network of various Christian Churches and various faith-based groups. **We strongly support this bill because we support the families of fallen soldiers who gave their lives in an ultimate sacrifice to defend LIFE, FAMILY and RELIGIOUS FREEDOM in this great nation. This is a way to honor their courage and faithfulness!**

According to the U.S. Army website, mothers of fallen service members began calling themselves "Gold Star Mothers" during the First World War. Since then, many of our nations sons and daughters have left their families to go to war. In honor of their sacrifice, President Barack Obama issued a proclamation recognizing Sunday, Sept. 25, as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day.

We support HB 2071 because we are very mindful of the sacrifice of every mother and father who has lost a son or daughter to the ravages of war. These lives are precious and their names and memory are etched in history even as back as far as the Revolutionary War. We honor these heroes who lost lives remain the bedrock for the United States of America and the freedoms we cherish.

The United States began observing Gold Star Mothers Day on the last Sunday of September in 1936 and this year, we pray that Hawaii will join the nation each year in recognizing the sacrifice and strength of its Gold Star Families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support this very important bill.

Roxanne Kamalu

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 12:06 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: sonnyfernan@msn.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2071 on Feb 5, 2014 08:30AM

HB2071

Submitted on: 2/4/2014

Testimony for VMI on Feb 5, 2014 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stanley Y. Fernandez Sr.	Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States	Support	No

Comments: In Full Support of HB 2071.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

Date: February 2, 2014

To: The Honorable K. Mark Takai, Chair
The Honorable Ken Ito, Vice Chair
Committee on Veterans, Military, and International Affairs, and Culture and the Arts

From: Mike Golojuch, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Chair, Advisory Board on Veterans' Services

Subject: Support for HB2071

As a veteran I strongly support HB2071, to recognize the family members of those women and men who gave their lives to their country while serving with the armed forces of the United States. A designation of a day will never repay the loss of a love one but it will let them know that we wish to thank the family members for the sacrifice their family made to our country.

I strongly urge that you pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the views of the Advisory Board.

February 5, 2014

SUBJECT: HB 2071 RELATING TO GOLD STAR FAMILY DAY

FROM: Allen K. Hoe

TESTIMONY FOR: Chair Representative K. Mark Takai, Vice Chair Representative Ken Ito and members of the Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs & Culture and the Arts.

Aloha Chair Takai and members. My name is Allen K. Hoe, I am here today to speak in support of HB 2071. As a keiki o ka aina, when it came my time to serve my country, in 1966 I did so with a lot of pride following in the "local" tradition of many of my ohana and friends. I thought I knew what being a "Gold Star Family" meant in the days of my youth.

In combat in Vietnam I experienced the horrors of war as I witnessed buddies standing next to me lose their lives. In Vietnam the casualties we took made us all a little numb to the cruel realities of war. I thought that I understood what being killed in combat was all about.

On January 22, 2005, when the 2 Army Officers came to my home in beautiful Maunawili Valley, I was not prepared for that message and the reality that my son Nainoa, had given his last full measure devotion, as President Lincoln would say, for his country in a place so foreign and so evil.

It still puzzles me why little is known about one of our Nation's most revered symbols, the "Gold Star Lapel Button" which Congress approved in 1947 to recognize the families of service members who lost their lives while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States. In 1973, Congress added the Lapel Button for the Next of Kin of Deceased Personnel to honor those who lose their lives while serving on active duty or while assigned in a Reserve or National Guard unit in a drill status.

House Bill 2071 which proposes to designate a special day in honor of the families of the men and women who have sacrificed so much for our great nation is a very fitting tribute and a way to remind all of us that freedom is not free.

I respectfully submit my testimony in support and urge the members of this committee to adopt this measure.

Allen K. Hoe
PO Box 3589
Honolulu, Hawaii 96811

**Testimony to the House Committee on Veterans, Military and
International Affairs, and Culture and the Arts**

Wednesday, February 5, 2013

8:30 AM

Conference Room 312

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2071, RELATING TO GOLD STAR FAMILY DAY

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and members of the committee.

My name is Charles Ota and I am the Vice President for Military Affairs at The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (The Chamber). I am here to state The Chamber's *support* of House Bill No. 2071, Relating To Gold Star Family Day.

The measure proposes to amend Chapter 8, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by adding a new section to appropriately designate the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Family Day" in recognition of family members of those men and women who gave their lives to their country while serving with armed forces of the United States in time of war or during periods of hostilities.

Hawaii joins with Illinois, North Dakota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin, and Guam, in celebrating an honor first observed by joint congressional resolution on June 23 1936.

In light of the above, we recommend the measure be approved.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony

Carswell J. Ross, Jr. M.A., Chief Master Sergeant, USAF Ret.
94-1020 Puana Street
Waipahu, HI 96797

Wednesday, February 05, 2014

Testimony on House Bill 2071, RELATING TO GOLD STAR FAMILY DAY

Presentation to the House Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs & Culture
and the Arts

Good morning Chair K. Mark Takai and Vice Chair Ken Ito and members of the Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs & Culture and the Arts.

I strongly **support** HB 2071, which DESIGNATES THE LAST Sunday in September as “Gold Star Family Day.” This legislation is a small tribute to the family members who have lost a family member who was serving this great country when they were taken from them.

This is a fitting honor for the State to grant to these family members.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.



HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

6301 Pali Highway
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224

Submitted: Online
Hearing on: Wednesday, February 5, 2014
Conference Room: 312

DATE: February 3, 2014
TO: House Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs, & Culture & the Arts
Rep. K. Mark Takai, Chair
Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair
From: Walter Yoshimitsu, Executive Director
Re: Strong Support for HB 2071 Relating to Gold Star Family Day

Honorable Chair & members of the House Committee on Veterans, Military and International Affairs, I am Walter Yoshimitsu, **representing the Hawaii Catholic Conference**. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii, which under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents Roman Catholics in Hawaii.

The Presidential Proclamation for this important day sums up the position of the Diocese of Honolulu...

*"On this day, we remember our commitment to the Gold Star mothers and families who carry on with pride and resolve despite unthinkable loss. We recall our sacred obligation to those who gave their lives so we could live ours. As a grateful Nation, we declare that we will never forget their sacrifice, and we renew our promise to build a future worthy of their devotion. We also recognize our countrymen and women who continue the fight, putting their lives on the line each day. Long after the battle is over, we will continue to give our military and Gold Star families the care and support they deserve -- in a listening ear, a comforting shoulder, a helping hand, and a moment given to keep alive the memories of their Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen." -
Presidential Proclamation -- Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, 2013*

The Hawaii Catholic Conference can find no better way to show our appreciation for the members of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives for this great country than to establish a Gold Star Family Day in Hawaii.

Let Hawaii become the 8th State to celebrate the men and women who are the very heroes to this great land of freedom that they lost their very lives defending.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Roxanne Kamalu

From: Lisa Vargas Omo
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 3:19 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: takai4-Michael
Subject: FW: Testimony: HB2071 HAWAII GOLD STAR FAMILY DAY (UNCLASSIFIED)

-----Original Message-----

From: Lisa Vargas Omo
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 1:47 PM
To: Rep. Ken Ito
Subject: Testimony: HB2071 HAWAII GOLD STAR FAMILY DAY (UNCLASSIFIED)

-----Original Message-----

From: Ignacio, Catherine C CIV USARMY IMCOM PACIFIC (US) [mailto:catherine.c.ignacio.civ@mail.mil]
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 1:30 PM
To: Lisa Vargas Omo
Cc: childcarepacific
Subject: RE: Request For Testimony: HB2071 HAWAII GOLD STAR FAMILY DAY (UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Caveats: NONE

Aloha,

I would like to share my testimony.

I do not wear the Gold Star Pin with the purple background, but I do wear the Gold Star Pin known as the "Next of Kin Lapel" because my husband died while serving in Active Duty, but not down range. As a Gold Star Family Member I feel that passing the bill will not only show continuous support from our legislature and continuous education to the community of the sacrifices that our Service Member and, us, Families made, but a true way of continuously honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our wonderful nation. My husband served four tours down range (1 Afghanistan and 3 Iraq), and was fortunately able to return home. However, August 21, 2012 changed our lives when we were notified of his death. He died at South Hampton, NY, due to a heart failure while traveling with our Presidential and Vice Presidential team with his unit, White House Communication Agency. Whether our Service Members were Killed in Action, or died on the Roads, due to illness or because they took their own lives, our Fallen Heroes and Families should be recognized and Honored for the many sacrifices made. This is why, I, as a Gold Star Family Member, request that the bill be passed.

I hope that you are able to use my testimony. Thank you for allowing me to share.

Have a wonderful afternoon.

Mahalo,

Catherine C. Ignacio, M.S.
Support Coordinator
Survivor Outreach Services
Aloha Center, Rm 104
217 Montgomery Dr. Bldg 330
Fort Shafter, HI 96858
(Direct) 808-438-1955
(Fax) 808-438-0942
Email: catherine.c.ignacio.civ@mail.mil

"Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising everytime we fall." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

It was my pleasure to assist you. Any ICE Comment feedback you can provide will be appreciated!

Click:

http://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=card&site_id=54&service_provider_id=2482

Find Survivor Outreach Services Hawaii on FACEBOOK at:

https://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn_tnmn#!/survivoroutreachsvcs.hawaiipacific

LATE

Brandy Williams
House Committee on Veterans, Military, and International Affairs and
Culture and the Arts
Wednesday, February 5, 2014 8:30am
HB 2071

My name is Brandy Williams and I am the widow of Sgt. Eugene Williams. My husband was killed in Najaf, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He deployed to Iraq with the 2-7th Infantry Marne Division out of Ft. Stewart, GA. His unit was one of the first to enter Bagdad and on March 29, 2003 my husband and three other soldiers were manning a road side check point. A taxi cab pulled over and waved for help. As my husband and his soldiers approached the vehicle, the driver detonated a bomb, killing my husband, Cpl. Michael Curtain, PFC Deigo Rincon and PFC Michael Creighton.

Our lives were forever changed that day. I lost my best friend, soul mate and the father of my then 3 year old daughter and another daughter still in my womb. Almost 11 years have gone by and not a day goes by that we don't think about him as we miss him dearly. We continue to honor him in every way we can. My husband loved what he did and went to war proudly serving his country. We have lost and continue to lose many brave service members. As we hope they will never be forgotten, honoring them through their families will help to ensure this.

I am asking that you support HB 2071, Relating to Gold Star Family Day. This day will help to honor our fallen loved ones. It will help to ensure that Hawaii will never forget those that have died fighting for their country.

Thank you.

Brandy Williams
Proud Army Wife of Sgt. Eugene Williams
KIA March 29, 2003 OIF