

11 February 2013

Hawai'i State Senate  
Committee on Tourism and Hawaiian Affairs  
Sen. Brickwood Galuteria, Chairman  
Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chairman

Hawai'i State Senate  
Committee on Technology and the Arts  
Sen. Glenn Wakai, Chairman  
Sen. Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chairman

Monday, February 11, 2013  
Conference Room 224 | 2:45PM

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT  
Senate Bill 235

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and members of the committees,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. As a former Commissioner and Chairman of the King Kamehameha Celebration Commission, I am in strong support of Senate Bill 235. There are a number of important pieces in the proposed legislation that will allow the commission to further grow its statewide responsibility to honor King Kamehameha 'Ekahi, the warrior, the King, the statesman and the father.

There are two crucial matters in this bill that are vital to the Commission's growth and survival. Allowing the program to remove the arts program specialist and create an executive director position will be a huge leap in the right direction for the administration of the Commission. This will allay many of the current inhibitions faced by the Commission's staff.

Secondly, including the state as funder will allow the commission to request funds from State. In 1996, Governor Cayetano cut funding for the Commission – while he was well intentioned in spearheading a private fundraising campaign, the novelty eventually wore off and the Commission and its staff was left with an insurmountable load of work to manage. In the years since, there has not been one year that I can remember where the commission looks at the potential of closing up shop.

Please give strong consideration to this measure.

Mahalo nui,

Adrian K. Kamali'i

TESTIMONY OF  
NINIAU KAWAIHAE SIMMONS  
IN SUPPORT OF SB 235

Aloha mai kakou and mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB 235. I had the privilege of working for the King Kamehameha Celebration Commission in 2010 as it planned Hawaii's bicentennial celebration on June 11. At the time of my hiring, no general funds were received by the commission – either for personnel costs or costs of the event – and revenue for the trust was primarily a grant from Hawaii Tourism Authority. During my tenure there, I was able to research the history of the June 11 Kamehameha Day celebration and from its inception in 1871, was held as a national day of celebration. By the early twentieth century, the old Hawaiian newspapers had front page coverage of the events which began with a small parade from 'A'ala Park to the Kamehameha Statue. The beautiful pictures show Territory leaders, our deposed Queen Lili'uokalani, and Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole who served as the event organizer until his death in 1922.

After statehood, the Kamehameha Day activities still carried the nationalistic fervor of the days of Prince Kuhio with the pageantry of lei-draping and the ornate floats and pa'u riders. Funding for the commission came from the Territory and then the State Legislature – it was only in the year or two prior to my hiring that all general funding was stopped. And that, unfortunately, was a shame and an abrogation of the State's kuleana toward a national holiday. The office is run by a lone Executive Director, a name change that should be reflected in statute, and a cadre of dedicated volunteers. It is my firm belief that no other holiday brings in more tourist revenue to the State than Kamehameha Day. And if the state's only investment in the event is in in-kind donations, then I believe the commission and the trust is getting the short end of the stick. The Executive Director of this commission should receive the same state standing as other executive directors of the state: Foundation on Culture & the Arts and Elections, to name two. Funding for the two other existing positions should also come from the state: Clerk-Typist and a half time Clerk Typist. I can relay to you from experience how stressful the weeks leading up to the event can be and with only one person to return calls or field questions, the Executive Director's position is a difficult one.

I support all of the statutory changes as cited in SB 235 and hope you will consider its passage in its entirety.