

**HB2573**

TO: Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and members of the Veterans, Military, International Affairs and Culture & Arts Committee,

FROM: Alan Akaka

RE: HB 2573 Relating to the State Instrument

DATE: March 8, 2014

My name is Alan Akaka. I am the director of Ke Kula Mele Hawaii School of Hawaiian Music and a professional steel guitarist and musician. I perform with the steel guitar weekly in Waikiki and I have appeared on and made many recordings of Hawaiian steel guitar music during the past twenty years. While I play many instruments, the Hawaiian steel guitar is my primary instrument. I am also a member and a past president of the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association (HSGA).

Ke Kula Mele Hawaii provides education and instruction in Hawaiian instruments. While I have many students learning the ukulele, guitar and upright bass, a large percentage of my school is learning how to play the Hawaiian steel guitar because of its popularity and because it is so symbolic of Hawaii and Hawaiian music. Student steel guitarists who range in age from nine years old through adult are always very popular at our semiannual public concerts and serve to help promote and perpetuate the Hawaiian steel guitar. On occasion some of these youthful steel guitarists are featured at public venues in Waikiki and other locales and at steel guitar festivals Statewide.

The Hawaiian steel guitar has its roots in Hawaii. The Hawaiian Steel guitar is not only an instrument that is indigenous to Hawaii, but is also in itself a unique way of playing that instrument which always generates an association to Hawaii and to Hawaiian music. While the ukulele is also a very popular instrument, its use is pervasive among all music genres and is not necessarily symbolic of or associated with Hawaii and/or Hawaiian music. In 2013 a song that reached number 3 on the Billboard Top 100 featured the ukulele as the song's only instrument. While this song has been used in many movie and television productions (with the exception of one Hawaii-referenced television show where it was used as background music) the productions themselves bore no reference to Hawaii or to Hawaiian music. Neither does the song itself. There is no immediate connection when hearing the sound of an ukulele to Hawaii, unless it is within context of Hawaiian music which almost always includes a Hawaiian steel guitar.

On the other hand, the unique sound of the Hawaiian Steel guitar and the art of its playing immediately conjures up images of hula dancers and palm trees, in direct association with Hawaii. Simple characteristic Hawaiian steel guitar patterns, when played with no other instrument, are immediately recognized as Hawaiian. The Official State instrument should be a symbol that is representative of and consistently associated with Hawaii.

I hereby submit my testimony in opposition to House Bill HB2573. Please reconsider your decision to make the Ukulele the Official Instrument of the State of Hawaii.

Letter to HI about Uke.txt

Aloha... I feel as though I must weigh in on this bill. I have recently become a board member and newsletter editor/web master of the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club (AISGC), and have been a member of that club and the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association (HSGA) since 2006.

I play Hawaiian Steel Guitar, and came to that via my appx. 50 years of playing "traditional American roots music": acoustic country blues, bluegrass, jug band, ragtime, pop, etc. I also grew up having a music teacher for a mother, so have been involved in music almost all of my life. I play guitar, mandolin, Dobro, 5-string banjo, ukulele, autoharp, etc., have played for fun, semi-professionally, and professionally. I also build ukuleles, repair instruments, collect, buy/sell, etc.

In 2005, I attended the HSGA convention in Joliet, IL, about 1.5 hrs. from my home in Illinois. I was smitten. After 30 years of playing bluegrass Dobro and acoustic lap slide guitar, I suddenly had found a new love. The following year, I showed up with an acoustic guitar tuned to C6 and tried to emulate the music that I heard. I watched the Hawaiian players, asked questions, and was in general a pest! My now good friend Bobby Ingano (a multi-Grammy winner on Hawaiian Steel Guitar, btw) showed me the basics, and I continued from there! I now play electric lap steel as well as the acoustic.

I am currently taking lessons via Skype from Alan Akaka (Ke Kula Mele Hawaii School of Hawaiian Music), and I have traveled to Hawaii for the HSGA conventions at the Queen Kapiolani since 2009, also playing in the HSGA tent in the park on May Day. Those conventions are in the odd-numbered years, but I now travel every year so I can also attend and play at the festival on Maui in April (formerly run by Henry Allen, now run by Alan Akaka).

So, had I not discovered the Hawaiian Steel Guitar, I would not be attending any of these events and traveling to Hawaii. Like the 5-string banjo on the mainland, the Hawaiian Steel Guitar is truly unique, and as such deserves special recognition. I can guarantee you that, for me at least, hearing the ukulele does not have the same impact that the Steel Guitar has -- "Tiptoe Through the Tulips" does NOT remind me of Hawai'i or encourage me to travel there! And, after all, it did come from Portugal. The guitar came from Mexico, BUT it was a Hawaiian who made it sing. Thanks to the Hawaiian Steel Guitar, there is now steel guitar in country music (via Jimmy Rodgers), sacred steel gospel music, pop, rock and folk music.

It is truly THE Hawaiian instrument, and I would humbly ask that you vote against HB2573 and work for a bill designating the Hawaiian Steel Guitar as THE official instrument!

Mahalo nui

Dave "DK" Kolars  
623 Franklin St.  
DeKalb, IL 60115

Dave Kolars

**Gordon Fernandez**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 08, 2014 9:27 AM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** graves.johnb@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM

**HB2573**

Submitted on: 3/8/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
John Graves	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: While the ukulele is associated with Hawaii, the Hawaiian steel guitar has a unique sound that instantly conjures up images of Hawaii. If there is going to be one "state instrument," I have no doubt that the Hawaiian steel guitar should be it. It was invented here and is internationally recognized as a symbol of Hawaii. Respectfully submitted, John Graves

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

**Gordon Fernandez**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 08, 2014 10:00 AM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** mrswarshawsky@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM

**HB2573**

Submitted on: 3/8/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gale Warshawsky	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: Regarding HB2573: My name is Gale Warshawsky. I am a student of Kumu Alan Akaka at Ke Kula Mele Hawaii. I learn to play ukulele and sing Hawaiian songs, and have been Kumu Akaka's student for 4 years. During that time I have had the pleasure of performing in Ke Kula Mele concerts, where I play my ukulele for Hawaiian music, and also as background ukulele music in support of the steel guitar students when they get to perform their solos and their ensemble selections. The more I heard the steel guitar, the more interested I became in that instrument, especially as the steel guitar is indigenous to Hawaii. About 2 years ago I asked Kumu Akaka if I could learn to play the steel guitar as well as continue my studies with him on the ukulele. He created a beginner's class for adults who wanted to learn to play steel guitar too. I have now had the incredible experience of playing steel guitar for one and a half years. I got to play it with the Ke Kula Mele ensemble at two of our concerts last May and last Dec. It was most exciting to play the Hawaiian steel guitar as part of the steel guitar ensemble. We had 22 steel guitar students, children through senior citizens, all playing together in the steel guitar ensemble, while the other students on ukulele, Hawaiian style bass, and guitar, played background music to support us steel guitar students. Learning how to play the Hawaiian steel guitar is challenging and rewarding. It is a very unique instrument whose roots are associated with Hawaii and Hawaiian music. Portuguese immigrants brought the ukulele to Hawaii. Whereas, the Hawaiian steel guitar was invented here in Hawaii by Joseph Kekuku, and the Hawaiian steel guitar should be the state instrument. I humbly ask you to select the Hawaiian steel guitar as the State instrument. It is the PONO thing to do.

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and members of the Veterans, Military, International Affairs and Culture & Arts Committee,

my name is Pavel Mikhaylov, I am active musician and contemporary music composer, one of the pioneers of electronic music in 90s and serious explorer and keeper of various authentic world music traditions till nowadays.

Since the year 2010 I am active Hawaiian Steel Guitar learner and I need to mention that I am the only person in my country who started to work with the Steel Guitar and Hawaiian music and include it into my own compositions, movie and theater scores and use Hawaiian musical and mythological motifs in my art and live concerts. Last year I took a part in Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association convention in Honolulu and received a word of encouragement as well as discovered many new contacts and forms of interrelationship.

The Hawaiian steel guitar has its roots in Hawaii. The Hawaiian Steel guitar is not only an instrument that is indigenous to Hawaii, but is also in itself a unique way of playing that instrument which always generates an association to Hawaii and to Hawaiian music. In my country only a few professionals knows what is Ukulele or Hula, but then people on the street hear the Steel Guitar sound they immediately say: "Agh... It is Hawaiian music!".

While the ukulele is also a very popular instrument, its use is pervasive among all music genres and is not necessarily symbolic of or associated with Hawaii. There is no immediate connection when hearing the sound of an ukulele to Hawaii, unless it is within context of Hawaiian music which almost always includes a Hawaiian steel guitar.

On the other hand, the unique sound of the Hawaiian Steel guitar and the art of its playing immediately conjures up images of hula dancers and palm trees, in direct association with Hawaii in every country all around the world. Simple characteristic Hawaiian steel guitar patterns, when played with no other instrument, are immediately recognized as Hawaiian.

The Official State instrument should be a symbol that is representative of and consistently associated with Hawaii and it is clear to me from the other side of the world!

I hereby submit my testimony in opposition to House Bill HB2573. Please reconsider your decision to make the Ukulele the Official Instrument of the State of Hawaii.

Lanet Abrigo  
Abrigo 'Ohana band  
President Malama Mele O Hawaii Hawaiian Civic Club

Aloha Mai,

March 7, 2014

My name is Lanet Abrigo. I am band manager and bassist for the band known as the Abrigo 'Ohana, president of Malama Mele O Hawaii Hawaiian Civic Club, active member of both the Hui Aha Mele and the Aha Hui advisory boards at Waimea Valley.

The intent of this letter is to serve as my testimony against HB2573. There are many reasons that I object to this bill...

First, the only instrument invented in Hawaii was created back in the year 1874. It was invented by a Hawaiian man named Joseph Kekuku, and that instrument is the steel guitar. The steel guitar is an instrument that takes years to learn to play and finesse. It requires dedication and hours of weekly practice to become a performing steel guitarist. Because of this hard work, there are only a handful of performing steel guitarists today. At present, there are groups and organizations working hard to promote the steel guitar. Making the ukulele (a non Hawaiian instrument) our state instrument would be extremely detrimental to this effort, which is to keep what is truly Hawaiian alive.

Another choice to be considered as our state instrument would be Hawaiian slack key guitar. This style of music can be played on any standard guitar by simply altering the tuning. This style is credited to the Hawaiian cowboys, who cleverly created new tunings on the guitars left behind by the Spanish vaqueros (cowboys) in the early 1800s. The argument to slack key guitar being the state of Hawaii instrument is that alternate tunings have been played for centuries around the world, and it is a style to be played on a standard guitar, not a uniquely Hawaiian instrument.

Because of the simplicity of the ukulele, it can be learned quickly and easily by a person at any age. This is why the ukulele is taught at many elementary schools across the State of Hawaii. It is also experiencing a great deal of popularity globally. As wonderful as this is, it doesn't change the fact that it is not a Hawaiian instrument. It did become popular here in Hawaii, but was not invented in Hawaii. To recognize the ukulele as Hawaii's instrument would misrepresent Hawaii's true musical history.

The bottom line is, do we want to be swayed by what is popular today, or do we want to hold fast to our history and culture? If the latter is the choice, then we clearly must squash this bill and write one that will properly educate the world on the Hawaiian man that invented a one of a kind guitar, right here in Hawaii.

I hereby submit this, my testimony, in opposition to house bill HB2573. I humbly ask you to please reconsider the decision to make the ukulele the official instrument of Hawaii.

Lanet Abrigo,  
abrigooohana.com  
malamamele.com

Testimony- House Bill HB2573 Hawaii.txt

Hello from GeorgeBoards - Manufacturer of Hawaiian Steel Guitars  
I have made Hawaiian Steel guitars since 1994 with over 500 owners in every USA  
State and over 20 countries worldwide.

My immediate family have lived on Maui starting in 1964 and through today.  
Currently my last living relative, oldest brother is a Hawaiian Woods Specialist and  
well know on Maui.

My Testimony is to support altering House Bill HB2573 In Support of The Hawaiian  
Steel Guitar.  
Hopefull my testimony will underscore the need for Steel Guitar to become The State  
Instrument in perpituity.

Please take what ever steps neccessary to defeat this bill in it's current wording  
and reword or re-present as a new Bill so that the Steel Guitar can hold it's  
deserved place in Hawaiian History for ever.

Best Regards George Boards Piburn



Aloha Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair, and Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair,  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Technology and the Arts:

My name is Warren Barnes. I am writing to oppose HB 2573 as drafted.

The ukulele is an honorable instrument, but is not uniquely identified with Hawaii. Even when it is used as background in Hawaiian music, more often than not it is along with a Hawaiian Steel Guitar. I am unaware of any data that would suggest that naming the ukulele Hawaii's official musical string instrument would spread Hawaiian culture or have a favorable impact on Hawaii's economy.

By contrast, the Hawaiian Steel Guitar is uniquely identified with Hawaii. In fact, it is indigenous to Hawaii. Moreover, throughout the world the unique sound of the Hawaiian Steel Guitar, as solo or background, causes listeners to think immediately of Hawaii and frequently fuels a desire to be in Hawaii. That association exists with no other instrument. I believe that naming the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Hawaii's official musical string instrument would do more to spread Hawaiian culture and enhance Hawaii's economy than any other no-cost measure.

I have played four other instruments, but I love my Hawaiian Steel Guitar the most. On any Island and anywhere on the mainland, with my Hawaiian Steel Guitar I participate in and, ideally, help to spread Hawaiian culture. More than anything else in the world, the Hawaiian Steel Guitar is uniquely and delightfully Hawaiian, and that is precisely why I play it.

In summary, I urge a "no" vote on HB 2573. I also recommend that you favorably consider naming the Hawaiian Steel Guitar the official musical string instrument of Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Warren Barnes

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and members of the Veterans, Military, International Affairs and Culture & Arts Committee,

My name is Don Woods.

I am a former resident of Hawaii and I am presently the President of the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club, a world-wide steel guitar organization, which has as its major goal - the perpetuation of the Hawaiian Steel Guitar.

**The Aloha International Steel Guitar Club** with its international membership is speaking **against House Bill HB2573**.

The reasons that our organization is speaking **against House Bill HB2573** are because the bill:

- **excludes and does not identify the Hawaiian Steel Guitar as the only indigenous Hawaii instrument invented in 1889 by a Hawaiian man, Joseph Kekuku,**
- **does not recognize or promote the awareness that the Hawaiian Steel Guitar is the primary Hawaiian instrument that has been associated with Hawaii and Hawaiian music to a worldwide audience,**
- and **does not recognize or pay tribute to a profound and significant history that the Hawaiian Steel Guitar and the playing of it became a worldwide movement and phenomenon,** beginning in Hawaii and spreading throughout the world.

While the Portuguese ukulele has some history in Hawaii, it does not meet the solid criteria set forth above; therefore, House Bill HB2573 should be rejected. Adoption of this bill has the potential to create much divisiveness for years to come.

**In place of HB 2573, I propose that a new compromise bill be introduced.** A new bill should embrace both the Hawaiian Steel Guitar and the Portuguese Ukulele as the 'auwana instruments of the State of Hawaii.

We can be reminded that legislating is often a process of compromise and this would fit not only that principle but the "Spirit of Aloha."

**Gordon Fernandez**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 08, 2014 6:25 PM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** emeisse@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM

**HB2573**

Submitted on: 3/8/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Edward Meisse	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: I am not a resident of Hawaii. But I am a big fan of Hawaiian music and a Hawaiian steel guitar player. For me, the steel guitar is the instrument that I associate with Hawaii. I am sure others have already reminded you that the steel guitar is the only modern instrument invented in Hawaii by a Hawaiian and whose most famous and best players have been Hawaiian. The ukulele is from Portugal. And while it is often used in Hawaiian music, it is the instrument of choice for pretty much anybody who wants to have an instrument that is easy to carry around, whatever kind of music they might wish to play. It's association with Hawaii is much weaker. Thanks.

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

## Gordon Fernandez

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 09, 2014 12:40 AM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** bculture@jt3.so-net.ne.jp  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM

### HB2573

Submitted on: 3/9/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tadashi Arakawa	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: HB2573HD1 relating to the state instrument. Dear person in charge, This is Tadashi Arakawa from Yokohama, Japan. I am one of fan loving Hawaiian music and Hawaiian instruments. Recently I get the news that you are considering to make UKULELE as the official instrument of the State of Hawaii. Relating to this matter, I would herein submit testimony to you. In Japan, especially in summer season sound of Hawaiian Steel Guitar is streaming in many public places such as restaurants, hotels, hospitals and department stores etc. Hearing to this sound, almost people says that oh ! this is Hawaiian music, how sweet Steel Guitar sound is and this is in a real Hawaiian paradise. Ukulele is actually very popular in Japan now a day and many people are enjoying to play it. But they are playing music in many fields rather very few to play Hawaiian music. Another point, Japanese people sitting in Hawaiian music field knows already Hawaiian steel guitar has its roots in Hawaii but ukulele in Portugal. Therefore if you decide ukulele as state instrument, people here may says WHY? I do hope you will decide HAWAIIAN STEEL GUITAR as official instrument of the State of Hawaii. Sincerely yours and Mahalo, Tadashi Arakawa March 9, 2014

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

3/9/14

Aloha,

I just received word of this state bill concerning an official instrument.

It feels like some special interest group is moving way to fast, and not really cognitive of the seriousness and accuracy needed to offer an intelligent suggestion.

While the Portuguese ukulele has traveled the world and been adopted for use by many cultures, the primary reason is for its small size and easy learning. It is not "from" Hawaii, nor is it only used in conjunction with Hawaiian music.

The fact that the Ipu, (Polynesian), or Kika-kila,( STEEL GUITAR BORN IN HAWAII) are taking a back seat to this "flea that rode the cargos of a bygone era", is an insult to the lineage of the Hawaiian people of the last 120 years..

Creating a state bill on whim and fancy degrades the intelligence of everyone with any knowledge of Hawaiian history and its elected officials.

Instead, why not stop to think for a minute? Hawaii is one of few spots on earth that seriously honors its ancestors and remembers and follows the wisdom that came.

How better to sanctify and respect Hawaii and the ingenuity of Joseph Kekuku, and the subsequent Hawaiian players of this beautiful indigenous instrument, the STEEL GUITAR. Many of the early players left the homeland to make a living, and brought the 'STEEL all over the world.

STEEL GUITAR is not learned in 20 mins sitting on a couch somewhere, it's considered on par with other classical instruments like the violin and piano. It takes a lifetime to play, and always challenges the musician. –what better example to the world, and Hawaii's young folks, to strive for excellence no matter the difficulty.

Please take the time to understand the ramifications of your decision. No need to play to tourists and foreigners with something important like Hawaiian music and its roots.

Ron Ellison

3/9/14

Dear Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and members of the Veterans, Military, International Affairs and Culture & Arts Committee:

Imagine you are stuck in the Midwest this winter. Unprecedented cold, daunting snow, treacherous ice, and endless grey skies. You wonder if the temperature will ever warm up even just a little. In fact, along with the temperature drop, your spirit drops. Just surviving the winter takes a large part of your energy and spirit.

Now imagine you can hear music that takes your imagination to your islands. Sounds that are made lush from string chords, evokes an emotion and promise of tropical trade winds, coco palms and sweet aloha. It is the most evocative sound of the islands – the lap steel guitar. Your spirit and energy soars upon hearing the soft melodies.

I have been playing lap steel guitar and taking Skype lessons from the islands for over one year. I would like to respectfully persuade you not to back HB 2573, which if passed, would make the ukulele the state instrument.

The sound of the lap steel guitar is immediately recognizable world-wide as the ‘voice of the islands.’ Joseph Kekuku and James Hoa were the first to put a guitar on its back and glide a metal piece across its strings – an entirely unique sound that would come to permeate world consciousness as Hawaiian, and ONLY HAWAIIAN.

Additionally, the ukulele, was the work of two Portuguese, - Nunes and Santos. Yes, the world is experiencing the third resurgence of this very popular instrument. However, the ‘uke’ neither has connotative quality of the lap steel, nor the cultural roots of the lap steel guitar.

In closing, thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit testimony on HB2573. Please give the lap steel guitar the recognition it so richly deserves.

Jacquelyn Luongo

606 NW Central St

Lee’s Summit, MO 64063

816-506-7345

My name is Kay Das and I am known to Alan Akaka for many years. As a steel guitar enthusiast, performer, promoter, and recording artist, who was inspired by Alan, I would like to add to this testimony towards changing the nomination of the ukulele as "state instrument" for Hawaii. The ukulele, although a fine instrument, has association with Hawaiian music due to it being easy to learn, great to carry around in a back-pack, that can be taken to the beach or fireside primarily to accompany singing. And it is true that its popularity has grown immensely in recent years for these very reasons. It is, however, a universal instrument and can be found on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro, Brighton, Florida, and many beach resorts and clubs promoting its popularity. It has no unique association with the state, history, and musical culture of Hawaii.

The steel guitar, however, has a very unique association with the history, state, and culture of Hawaii. It was invented in Hawaii, and that seems to have been no accident. The sounds of the steel bar moving across strings lent itself to the embryonic nature of music composed in Hawaii and traditional to it. And that is why the steel guitar merits a unique place in the music of Hawaii. There is no other instrument that brings the aura of Hawaii back to the visitor when he or she has returned home. A small personal anecdote: I was playing the steel guitar impromptu with ukulele friends on the pier at Waikiki one evening last May. A lady from England walked up to me and said that she had been in Hawaii a couple of weeks but the enduring memory of her visit was going to be the sound of the steel guitar on that pier that evening.

I think I have said it all right there.

On a larger perspective, the steel guitar as an art form in Hawaii needs as much encouragement as it can get. It is a difficult instrument to master and therefore not readily taken up by the youth of today. Alan is doing sterling work in bringing the steel guitar to the young and needs all the support possible. What better way to make this happen than making it the state instrument of Hawaii?

Kay Das

To the Hawaiiin State Legislature

Re: Hawaiian Steel Guitar should be the state musical instrument.

Dear State Representatives,

I would like to oppose the HB 2573 and instead should have the Hawaiian Steel Guitar as the state musical instrument because the Steel Guitar is truly created in Hawaii, by native Hawaiian, and when played, everybody know it represents all aspects of Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,

Signed: Ken Woo

Ken Woo MD

Mar 9 2014



**Gordon Fernandez**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 09, 2014 2:46 PM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** mgp9993@aol.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM  
**Attachments:** testimony.docx

**HB2573**

Submitted on: 3/9/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mark Prucha	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

**Gordon Fernandez**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 09, 2014 6:29 PM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** ekeawe@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM

**HB2573**

Submitted on: 3/9/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Eric K. Keawe	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: I know many professional musicians who are ukulele artists. I understand the purpose of this bill. Unfortunately I cannot support this bill for the sole purpose that the ukulele origin did not come from Hawaii. Although my mother a well respected individual of the entertainment community played the Ukulele as her main instrument. And in her own style she was very good at it too. I'd like to propose the Steel Guitar as the instrument for the State of Hawaii.

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Testimony for hb2573

Dear House Chair, Vice-Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Thomas A. Ching. I would like to recommend that you vote to have the Hawaiian Steel Guitar named as the State Instrument. I was born and raised on Oahu. I have been a practicing dentist here for the past 30 years. I am not an expert on Hawaiian musical instruments but I do listen to Hawaiian music of 8-10 hours per day six days a week at my office as do my patients and office staff.

There is one and only one instrument that produces a sound that when heard immediately says Hawaii. That instrument is the Hawaiian Steel Guitar. It is the only string instrument that was invented in Hawaii by a Hawaiian. I believe he was Joseph KeKuii from Laie, HI.

Voting for a state instrument is a very important event as it defines us and our state. It tells the rest of the world this is us. Please vote for an instrument that is Hawaii, invented and founded by a Hawaiian and when it is played and heard makes people think of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Ching, DDS

To: Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and members of the Veterans, Military, International Affairs and Culture and the Arts Committee

Date: March 9, 2014

Aloha kākau,

My name is Virginia P Hayes and I am a lap steel haumana of Kumu Alan Akāka. Growing up in the 50s, Hawaiian Lap Steel was the instantly recognizable sound of "The Islands" for me and my family. It is an instrument indigenous to Hawai'i and its introduction to the mainland around 1915 was a treasured gift to the world. To this day, the melodic glide of steel on strings brings to mind all that is beautiful and unique about Hawai'i and its special music. The acknowledgement and perpetuation of an instrument and sound recognized throughout the world as uniquely Hawaiian is vitally important. It is for this reason that I would like to see it declared the Official State Instrument of the State of Hawai'i in opposition to the ukulele as set forth in House Bill HB2573  
Respectfully Submitted March 9, 2014

**Gordon Fernandez**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 09, 2014 8:11 PM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** kimmer.bighorse@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM

**HB2573**

Submitted on: 3/9/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kimmer Horsen	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: Sen. Brickwood Galuteria; Sen. Clayton Hee; Rep. Calvin Say; Sen. Jill Tokuda; Sen. Glenn Wakai; Sen. Donna Mercado Kim; Sen. Russell Ruderman; Sen. Gilbert Kahele; Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland; Sen. Roz Baker; HSGA of Directors; Ku'uipo Kumukahi; James Stone; Greg Sardinha; Lorene Ruymar; Don Woods; Don Kellett Subject: Official Instrument of Hawaii Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and members of the Veterans, Military, International Affairs and Culture & Arts Committee, I believe the Steel guitar should be the official instrument of the state of Hawai'i because it was invented by Joseph Kekuku at Kamehameha Schools. In 1874 Joseph Kekuku was born in La'ie, Hawai'i. In 1889, Joseph and his cousin left for Kamehameha School for boys. He is recognized as the inventor of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Innovative islanders produced a new effect by slacking the guitar strings to a new major chord tuning. The strings were plucked not strummed. The bass carried the basic rhythm and the higher strings carried the melody to simulate the matchless falsetto voice of the Hawaiians. The steel guitar became endeared to the musical hearts of the people of Hawai'i. At 15, Joseph Kekuku amazed his schoolmates at The Kamehameha School for Boys in Honolulu, with the "sweet sounds" he produced running a hair comb or tumbler across the guitar strings. In the school shop, Kekuku developed the smooth, steel playing bar used today, and raised the guitar frets so that the bar would glide easily across the strings. He also switched from gut to wire strings for more sustained notes, and designed individual finger picks for the opposing hand, Before he died, Kekuku had toured all of the United States and most of Europe teaching and popularizing the steel guitar. By the early 1900s, the popularity of Kekuku's invention, the steel guitar, was firmly established in Hawaiian music, and soon after in the country music field. Please endorse the indigenous steel guitar as the state instrument of Hawai'i. The ukulele was brought here by Portuguese immigrants. I hereby declare that I oppose bill HB 2573. Mahalo nui loa. Very Respectfully, Kimmer Horsen U.S. Army D.A.V. O'ahu Musician

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

**Gordon Fernandez**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 09, 2014 9:56 PM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** guitarbuilder@shaw.ca  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM

**HB2573**

Submitted on: 3/9/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
michael dunn	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: To whom it may concern; I wish to say that the official state instrument for the State of Hawaii should be the Steel Guitar and not the Ukulele. The steel guitar is a Hawaiian invention by Joseph Kekuku in the late 1800s and occupies a very important chapter in the overall history of the guitar in general. The "slide" guitar is known around the world as a Hawaiian Guitar and has several configurations from , the Weissenborn and Knutsen instruments in the 1920s to the National and Dobro guitars of the 1930e to the modern pedal steel guitar. The first solid body electric guitars were Hawaiian guitars. All born out of Kekuku's idea of playing the guitar horizontally on the lap with a steel bar. Ih is Hawaii's greatest contribution to the instrument world. Not to disparage the beloved ukulele in any way, but it is not a Hawaiian invention. It was brought to Hawaii by the Portuguese.  
Respectfully yours, Michael Dunn, guitarmaker Vancouver BC, Canada

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

**Gordon Fernandez**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, March 10, 2014 9:25 AM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** mkhan@hawaiiantel.net  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM

**HB2573**

Submitted on: 3/10/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha, I am a senior citizen and since I was a child, the 'ukulele has been at the heart of Hawaiian music, along with the bass and piano. It is probably the most used musical string instrument in the state of Hawai'i, enjoyed by keiki and adults. Having it as the state musical instrument honors its role in the music of Hawai'i and also the Portuguese community. Please support passage of this bill.

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

## Gordon Fernandez

---

**From:** Bob Beard <BBeard@pacificbeachhotel.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 10, 2014 10:28 AM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Subject:** HB2573 / SB 3107

To: Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Nishihara and members of the Technology and Arts Committee:

From: Robert Beard

Kailua, Hi 96734

Date: 03-10-14

RE: HB2573 and SB 3107 are put forward to confirm the State Stringed Instrument of Hawaii.

I oppose SB 3107 and HB 2573 as currently written. The ukulele is NOT of Hawaiian origin any more than a bagpipe is.

The ukulele is of Portuguese origin. While it is true that it is widely popular within Hawaii, and recognized world-wide as being a worthy instrument for playing Hawaiian melodies on, IT IS NOT OF HAWAIIAN ORIGIN.

Historically what we now call the ukulele is more correctly called the Braguina as it was named in its native Portugal. (also called the machete do braga). It is a fine instrument, fun to play, portable, not too expensive, etc...but none of these traits makes any less of what it truly is and that is an instrument of Portuguese design and origin. It is an adopted instrument, not an instrument of Hawaii.

To make the ukulele the state stringed instrument would be as blasphemous as making the Zebra dove the state bird. The Zebra dove can be seen everywhere, it is the bird most tourists could identify as one they saw in Hawaii, but it is not *from* Hawaii; it is not a Hawaiian bird; it was introduced to Hawaii just as the ukulele was.

**For Hawaii to adopt an instrument representative of Hawaii, the state of Hawaii, and the people and heritage of Hawaii we should appoint a musical instrument conceived and created here in Hawaii. The only instrument that embodies ALL of these qualities and aspects is the Hawaiian Guitar, or as it is more popularly known now, the Lap Steel, or Hawaiian Lap steel guitar.**

Historically the Hawaiian Lap steel creation is attributed to Hawaiian schoolboy Joseph Kekuku in 1885. That date Precedes the introduction of the Portuguese instrument that has become known as the Ukulele, and right there is the defining difference between choosing the Hawaiian Guitar as the state stringed instrument as opposed to the ukulele. The Hawaiian Guitar (lap steel guitar) was invented right here in Hawaii. The ukulele was brought to Hawaii and introduced here.

The Hawaiian guitar was so popular on the mainland in early-to-mid-1900's that it spawned a giant Hawaiian music fad and eventually that Hawaiian sound began to be incorporated into other genres of music. This is how Hawaiian music changed the world. That sound found its way into swing, blues, country, show tunes, Big band era music and eventually nearly every other form of music, and that sound was INVENTED right here in Hawaii. The instrument that creates that sound was INVENTED right here in Hawaii.



If the intent is to exemplify the creativity, the music, the heritage, the spirit and the tradition of the Hawaiian people it should be represented by an instrument OF the Hawaiian people. And that instrument is the Hawaiian Lap Steel Guitar.

Thank you.

Robert Beard



Pacific Beach Hotel

**Bob Beard**

**CURATOR MANAGER**

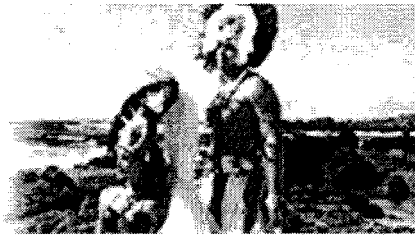
2490 Kalakaua Ave, Honolulu, HI 96815

Ph: (808) 921-1233 (Ext 6221) • Cell: (808) 782-0115 • Fax: (808) 922-0129

[www.PacificBeachHotel.com](http://www.PacificBeachHotel.com)

TE IIOHIA IUI  
TALES OF THE PACIFIC

[CLICK HERE](#)



Click [Here](#) for a live view from the hotel!





Dear Chair Wakai and Vice Chair Nishihara,

My name is Christopher Stump, Chair for Student Network for Action and Progress and we are in SUPPORT of HB2573 HD1, RELATING TO THE STATE INSTRUMENT.

Student Network for Action and Progress is a group dedicated to bringing the issues of importance to the attention of legislators. Students are notorious music fans, and nothing is more symbolic with Hawai'i and music than the Ukulele. Walking around the many campuses on the islands of Hawai'i it is a normal sight to see multiple students unwinding between classes with a ukulele. This versatile instrument does not only bring the sound of aloha to life, but it is so ingrained into the identity and way of life here in Hawai'i that having one close at hand is a normal occurrence. This normality is why we believe that the ukulele should be designated the state stringed instrument.

In closing, Student Network for Action and Progress are in SUPPORT of HB2573 HD1, RELATING TO THE STATE INSTRUMENT, and we urge you to do the same.

Christopher Stump

Chair

Student Network for Action and Progress

[www.snap-pac.com](http://www.snap-pac.com)

**Gordon Fernandez**

---

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, March 10, 2014 10:48 AM  
**To:** TECTestimony  
**Cc:** jswjr66@aol.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB2573 on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM

**HB2573**

Submitted on: 3/10/2014

Testimony for TEC on Mar 11, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
james wataru	Individual	Support	No

Comments: To: Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Nishihara and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Technology and the Arts; and Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito and Honorable Members of the House committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts From: Jamie Wataru Resident of Hawaii Kai RE:SB 3107 and HB 2573: Relating to the State Instrument Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and Honorable Members of the Committees. I am submitting testimony in STRONG support of SB 3107 and HB 2573 which would designate the 'ukulele the official string instrument of Hawai'i. For over 100 years, the 'ukulele has been an iconic instrument associated with Hawai'i. Throughout Hawaii's history, the 'ukulele has played a special and essential role in Hawaiian music. Soon after its introduction, the 'ukulele was quickly embraced by the Merrie Monarch himself, King David Kalakaua. King Kalakaua was an avid 'ukulele player and possessed a great appreciation for both traditional Hawaiian music as well as the musical innovations of His time. Designating the 'ukulele as our official state string instrument would not only recognize this unique instrument but also pay tribute to the world class 'ukulele musicians from our great state of Hawai'i and throughout the world. It is for these reasons that I stand in STRONG support of SB 3107 and HB 2573. Thank you very much for this opportunity to submit my testimony. Aloha and mahalo, Jamie Wataru Resident of Hawaii Kai

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](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and members of the Veterans, Military, International Affairs and Culture & Arts Committee, and to all others to whom it may concern,

My name is Buck Giles, born and raised on the island of Oahu. I am a professional musician and employee of the City and County of Honolulu Ocean Safety Division. I'm a supporting member of the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association (HSGA) and an advocate for the preservation and EDUCATION of all Hawaiian musical traditions. Being a multi-instrumentalist I perform regularly and have recorded on numerous albums with the Hawaiian steel guitar being my primary instrument.

Not to be confused with Slack Key guitar which is common among local residents and visitors, the indigenous Hawaiian Steel Guitar is the signature sound of Hawaii and Hawaiian music hands down. There is no other instrument in the world that when hearing the lilting sound and glissando of the steel bar on the strings that screams Hawaii. Despite its popularity world wide the Hawaiian Steel Guitar has become a fragile musical tradition almost forgotten and not very well documented as one of the most important instruments to influence Hawaiian, American and world guitar ethos. Its impact in the first half of the 1900's helped to shape Hawaiian and American music as we know it today and created the first world music craze of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The style and method invented by Hawaii's own Joseph Kekuku became so popular that the first electric guitar was a Hawaiian Lap Steel. It then became the signature sound of country music and influenced the guitar style of the blues.

When it comes to traditions in Hawaii we all know that it is very important to do your homework. To choose any instrument by popularity to represent Hawaii without thoroughly investigating its history would not be just.

I hereby submit my testimony in opposition to House Bill HB2573  
Please and I do implore reconsider your decision on making the ukulele the official string instrument of the State.