

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2598 by Kathryn Waddell Takara, PhD

The urgency to recover the history of blacks in Hawai`i is becoming more apparent with each passing day. Since the election of Barack Obama, the first admitted African American President of the United States, more local and national attention is being focused on Hawai`i black history and the experiences and identity issues of blacks in Hawai`i where Obama passed a formative time of his youth. The ideas and personal philosophy of Barack Obama were undoubtedly influenced by his socialization and education in the Hawaiian Islands. Certainly his democratic approach to politics and his beliefs in diversity, unity, and community (*ohana*) were in part formulated by his multi-racial family and his life in a diverse and sometimes challenging community with few black role models.

Kathryn Waddell Takara, PhD is a scholar/writer who understands the new historicism and the necessity of teaching and publishing African American history in Hawai`i. A long time resident of Hawai`i herself since 1968 who has worked closely with the local community, she continues to explore some of the dilemmas of identity and conflict in a place where Blacks are only 3.5% of the population, as well as to write about the unknown successes and triumphs of some outstanding black residents.

Unfortunately, for too long, the media and education system have ignored, controlled and/or marginalized blacks in local history, and thus images and perceptions of blacks have been controlled or omitted in the name of preserving the dominant American status, culture, **and attitudes**. Historically, identity and status in America, Hawai`i, and the world have been based on the privilege of skin color and wealth since the 1600's.

Fortunately, at the beginning of the 21st Century, we have reached a new plateau. Now we have an emerging New People of mixed races and cultures, a growing population of young people, immigrants, full of hopeful optimism, a belief in unity, equality, environmental and social justice, health care reform, and a better understanding and acceptance of otherness. No longer is the world bent on sailing toward whiteness as the only model of success and possibility.

It is past time to interrogate Hawaii's African Americans' issues of identity, pain, and the historical derogatory images of blacks in western art, literature, and the media that have permeated the national and local psyche. Censored the public record, the responsible student of black history in Hawai`i is left with fresh new images of and respect for their leadership roles, their successes and contributions in the whaling industry, business, education, science, civil service, the arts, social work, the military, and politics, from the beginning of black settlement. Indeed, some blacks past and present live large and often very successful lives in the lushness and verdant beauty of the Hawaiian Islands. For over 200 years, history reveals significant cultural and community organizations and events, demonstrating African American people working together with Hawaiians and the local residents.

There is power in words to represent and challenge history. Of course there are many stories about black immigration to the islands, including theories on early black migrations from Africa throughout the Pacific, including the often squelched references to Black royalty in the Pacific. There is substantial documentation of later migrations of blacks to Hawai`i in the 1800s. These

settlers, mostly men left families, slavery, their blues, and communities behind. Their initial acceptance into a generous and welcoming local Hawaiian community, their contributions to the small and evolving cultural and business worlds is too often overlooked. A study of history reveals the subsequent alienation and exclusion of black plantation workers in the growing immigrant community, the current paucity of blacks in the islands compared with other immigrants including Caucasians, Asians, Southeast Asians and Europeans, ironically given their relatively strong representation amongst the foreigners in the early 1800s.

Black contributions to the military in the Pacific theatre, to island politics, their strong role in education and talents in culture are another part of black history in Hawai`i that is often overlooked, including the Buffalo Soldier's great contribution in building the first road up Mauna Kea in 1919 so that the volcanologists could transport their scientific tools and machines up to the volcano to observe and work.

The struggle of blacks in Hawai`i to navigate between race and culture, ethnicity and history, is energized by their buckets of hope, an enduring spiritual tradition, and gallons of patience. As blacks slowly emerge from a storm of 20th Century resistance and stereotypes, unseen sharks of prejudice still lurk just below the surface of respectability and fair play in the form of glass ceilings, poverty or omissions in the media reveal a form of lingering collectible images and stereotypes that demonize or make blacks look different and inferior.

On a large scale, the role of blacks in world history is almost unknown in the islands, and youth, especially those with dark skins, can be inspired to strive for success with a more balanced teaching of history including ancient dark skinned African gods and goddesses, heroes and (s)heroes like Osiris, Isis, Nefertiti, the Queen of Sheba, the early African architects and astronomers, the black Magi, the ancient African universities and history of medicine and surgery, the mathematicians who envisioned the Pyramids, the black Madonnas and Saints found over Europe and S. America, the countless agriculturalists, environmentalists, musicians, actors, healers, dancers, the genius of the black community. If for no other reason than the future of our country is at risk, the values of continuity and connectedness seem important goals to cleave to.

There is medicine in memory. For the past 40 years, blacks have begun to research and write their own history in Hawai`i, debunking the myths and stereotypes, speaking riddles of opportunities and racial harmonies and the simultaneous lack of inclusion, the absent aloha and over representations of blacks in prison. The marginalized black history, the mixed marriages, and the contemporary perceptions of blacks as a group, ethnic and racial, different yet sharing experiences of discrimination and alienation, humor and humility is now beginning to be recognized and told.

The power of words, research, scholarship, and a community of strong voices and political organization are essential for the keepers of history and culture to bring dignity and respect to a group and to individuals. The historical voices of local black writers, organizers, activists, and the black national show the power of collective effort, the inspiration in music, the magic of working together for a common aim.

We must not accept the heavy mantle of mind control and social and economic violence against blacks. Instead we must value and understand the psychology of spiritual redemption in the study of black history in Hawai`i as the genius, talent, and history of African Americans in Hawai`i is recognized and celebrated with the same respect and support of the many other ethnic groups in the Islands. Clearly the shackles of fear, mistrust, and color prejudice can be released through the sharing and learning, history, culture, and contributions of Blacks in a more responsible communication through education.

Finally, President Barack Obama is a wonderful testament of the influence on cultural diversity and tolerance in an effort to situate and dignify Black history in Hawai`i in all its glory and challenges.

Blacks in Hawai`i and their significant and often overlooked and forgotten roles in establishing the values basic to democracy. The speeches contain themes of “we not me,” freedom, equality and justice under the law, values of citizenship, service, community, family, the sacred environment, spirituality, and compassion. There is the general support of health care reform, the commitment to end poverty and homelessness, and the development of a progressive, practical, and empowering educational system. There is the urgent call to reclaim and understand the history, migrations and representation of blacks in the diversity in the growth and development of the 19th century Hawaiian Islands, especially their role as marginalized citizens from the mid 1800s to after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893 and into the 21st Century.

In the 21st Century, Hawai`i stands first in line in nationally in intercultural communication, understanding, and respect for other and different cultures and ethnic groups. Blacks as a group have been invisible and must be allowed to join this circle of possibility and light through inclusion in local history and the sharing of our significant contributions to local, national and international history.

Beyond education, love is the bond that heals, and social interaction, intermarriage, blended families, and mixed race children all help to strengthen trust between groups and keep the soul fires burning. Miscegenation has not been an issue in the islands, although housing, and segregated facilities for the military did promote unsavory racial relations in the past.

Today, people and groups, including the military, navigate between the liquid mirror of race and culture to accept each other, to compromise and find mutual interests, to respect our humanity. We must include Black history in Hawai`i to strengthen understanding and promote and support inclusion.

Kathryn Waddell Takara, PhD.



March 5, 2014

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

Rep. K. Mark Takai, Chair	Rep. Romy M. Cachola	Rep. Clift Tsuji
Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair	Rep. Isaac W. Choy	Rep. Bob McDermott
Rep. Karen Awana	Rep. Takashi Ohno	Rep. Jessica Wooley
Rep. Tom Brower	Rep. Richard H.K. Onishi	

of African decent DATE: Wednesday, March 12, 2014

TIME: 8:30 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 312, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

RE: TESTIMONY FOR SB 2598 IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 2598 RELATING TO THE CULTURAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN HAWAII AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

Establishes the Hawaii commission on African American History and Culture to recognize the contributions of the African American people in Hawaii and educate residents and visitors to the State about these contributions. Appropriates funds to the Governor for the expenses of the commission.

Dear Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts:

Senate Bill 2598 is important to our beloved State for many reasons. Hawaii occupies a unique and remarkable position in both American geography and world history, so it is only appropriate to acknowledge the cultural contributions of African Americans as we have acknowledged the involvement of other peoples who have populated these Islands.

Individuals of African decent have resided in Hawaii since the 18th century, and made many contributions toward the advancement of our civil society, education, entertainment, law, science, agriculture, business, medicine, religion, sports, and politics. The election of our country's first African American President, Barak Obama, speaks loudly to how influential people of African decent have become.

Furthermore, there are many historical firsts made by African Americans in Hawaii:

- "Black Joe" – a master sail maker for King Kamehameha II;
- Betsy Stockton – educator and co-founder of the Lahainaluna School on Maui;
- Richard Armstrong – a pastor who served at Kawaiahao Church in Honolulu;
- William Lineas Maples, a physician; and his brother, Samuel Maples, a lawyer – both who worked at the Hawaii Commercial and Sugar Company;
- Alice Augusta Ball – the first African-American woman to graduate with a Master of Science degree in chemistry from the University of Hawaii, and who taught at that institution and helped develop a treatment for those suffering from Hansen's Disease;
- Carlotta Stewart-Lai – an African-American woman trailblazer in Hawaii's educational system who served as principal of the multi-ethnic Koolau Elementary;
- Kamaka Fernandez – Hawaii's top traditional Hawaiian falsetto singer immersed in Hawaiian culture on the island of Maui; and last but not least,
- Dorie Miller – a Navy cook assigned to the USS West Virginia who was stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. With no previous training, he operated an anti-aircraft gun and shot down enemy aircraft.

Senate Bill 2598 will not only recognizes these important and numerous contributions, but will encourage continued involvement. African Americans in Hawaii continue to make contemporary history, and Senate Bill 2598 will foster dialogue to advance the knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the history of African-Americans in Hawaii. I strongly support Senate Bill 2598, and urge you to pass this legislation.

Mahalo nui loa,

Roxanne Kamalu

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 09, 2014 8:25 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: A1A1azinga@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2598 on Mar 12, 2014 08:30AM

SB2598

Submitted on: 3/9/2014

Testimony for VMI on Mar 12, 2014 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
PM Azinga	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: The Honorable Chair, The Honorable Members of the Hawaii State Veterans, Military, International Affairs and Culture and the Arts Committee and Public My name is PM Azinga and I stand in strong opposition to SB2598 for the following reason. "The time is always right to do what is right." Martin Luther King, Jr. Anthony Allen, Betsy Stockton, Thomas Steward, Dr. William Maples, William Crockett, & Frank Davis have already contributed a meritorious legacy to the History of Hawaii. Their worth nor contribution to this society should not be trivialized nor marginalized however making this legislative effective only after 7/1/2050 is done just that. "Now", is the time to do what is right. Not to be unaccountable until 7/1/2050; in this generations' time not when most of us will be dead and buried some thirty-six years later. Now is the time to do what is right no longer is it acceptable to minimize their contribution. Any thing less desecrates their names. I stand in opposition of the time delay that this legislation will be effective; defacto allowing this legislature committee to be unaccountable again rather than effective date 5/1/2014. Mahalo

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.

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Roxanne Kamalu

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, March 08, 2014 12:47 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: donalddk@dkaarchitecture.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2598 on Mar 12, 2014 08:30AM

SB2598

Submitted on: 3/8/2014

Testimony for VMI on Mar 12, 2014 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Donald King	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: Please enable legislation to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of African American, innovators, business persons, educators and military personnel who have been apart of the life, culture and growth of Hawai'i since the 18th centuy. Funding of efforts to speard the word on these contributions is critical to their visibility. I expect the Hawai'i State Legislatry will do the right thing in the passage of this bill. Mahalo nui.

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.

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Hawaii Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition
www.mlk-Hawaii.com * mrjoy@hawaii.rr.com

March 10, 2014

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

Rep. K. Mark Takai, Chair

Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, March 12, 2014

TIME: 8:30 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 312

Testimony in support
for

S.B. 2598 With amendment-(see below)

RELATING TO THE CULTURAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN HAWAII AND AFRICAN AMERICANS.

Establishes the commission on African American history and culture to recognize the contributions of the African American people in Hawaii and educate citizens of the State.

We, The Hawaii Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition are in support of S.B. 2598.

We support the formation of the commission on African American history and culture and request that we are included in the commission.

We have been active in the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday since October 1986, the very beginning of the idea and formation of the holiday.

2014 is the 26th anniversary of the Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday in Hawai'i. The celebration has grown a lot over these years. The Holiday was officially proclaimed by

the state legislature to be the 3rd Monday of January and signed into law by Governor John Waihe'e to begin January 16, 1989.

During the heady days of the 80s when the state had lots of money the Martin Luther King commission was formed by the state. The interim commission was formed July 1, 1989 to June 30 1990. Then a permanent commission was formed. The State of Hawai'i Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission, (with commissioners from many different ethnic groups), won National awards for its scope and depth of the holiday celebrations. In 1995 as the state's money dried up the commission was sunset. The remaining money was transferred to the Civil Rights Commission.

To continue the work of the Commission, The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Coalition was incorporated in 1995 by a group of dedicated African-American residents of Honolulu. The coalition is a non-profit organization, which performs many community service events that carry on Dr. King's principles of peace for all mankind. To assist the fledging organization in 1996 the Civil Rights Commission stepped in with financial aid and expertise.

Since that time the Coalition has coordinated the Holiday Parade, Unity Rally, Candlelight Bell Ringing Ceremony, Statewide Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Poem Contest and other community events, which have grown larger every year.

At the behest of Mayor Jeremy Harris in 1998 the City & County of Honolulu has been the co-sponsor of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

Mahalo

MarshaRose Joyner
Past President – Hawaii Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition
www.mlk-hawaii.com
mrjoy@hawaii.rr.com

Roxanne Kamalu

From: Denisa Thompson <dthompson4@ft.newyorklife.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 9:27 AM
To: vmitestimony
Subject: African Cultural Rights

I truly believe in this Bill and support it 100%

SINCERELY

Denisa Thompson
Agent
Licensed # 126891 for agents in Hi
New York Life Insurance Company
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[Honolulu, Hi 96813](#)
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If you do not wish to receive email communications from New York Life, Please reply to this email, using the words "Opt out " in the subject line. dthompson4@ft.newyorklife.comNew York Life Insurance Company, [51 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10010](#)

DAPHNE E. BARBEE

ATTORNEY AT LAW
CENTURY SQUARE, SUITE 1909
1188 BISHOP STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813



Hearing Date: 3-12-14, 8:30 am.

TO: Honorable Representative K. Mark Takei, Chair and all members of the Veteran, Military and International Affairs and Culture and Art Committee

FROM: Daphne Barbee-Wooten, Attorney

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2598

Please support and pass SB 2598, with an effective date January 2015. SB 2598 goes a long way in ensuring African American History and contributions in Hawaii are recognized and documented. Very little literature acknowledges Black History in Hawaii and the positive achievements of African Americans in this State. African Americans have been business men (Anthony Allen, Wally Amos), Educators and School Principals (Carlotta Stewart Lai, Loraine Dale), Attorneys (G. McCant Stewart, William F Crockett), Judges (Sandra Simms) politicians (Charles M. Campbell, Helene Hale, Nolle Smith), Professors and writers (Dr. Kathryn Takara, Dr Miles Jackson, Dr. Elisa Joy White) UH Women's Athletic and Title 1X champions and Hawaii State DOE Superintendent (Dr. Donnis Thompson), dancers and choreographers (Earnest Morgan and Adele Chu), physicians (Dr. James McCoy, Dr. John Edwards) and organizations which champion civil rights (NAACP). Let's include positive images of African Americans in this State and share this history with all. After all, President Barack Obama, 44th President of the Untied States, was born in Hawaii and is African American.

The following books contain more information on African Americans contributions in

Hawaii: And They Came (Four -G Publishers Inc. 2001)

They Followed the Trade Winds (UH Press 2004)

African American Attorneys in Hawaii (Pacific Raven Press 2010)

African Americans in Hawaii : A Search for Identity (Pacific Raven Press 2010)

African Americans in Hawai'i (Arcadia Publishing 2011)

Thank you,



Daphne Barbee-Wooten

Steven Guttman



1022 Prospect Street, #908
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

March 11, 2014

Representative K. Mark Takai, Chairman
Representative Ken Ito, Vice Chairman
House Committee on Veterans, Military,
International Affairs & Culture and the Arts

RE: SB 2598
Hearing: March 12, 2014 at 8:30 a.m.

Dear Chairman Takai, Vice Chairman Ito and Members of the Committee,

This testimony is submitted in support of SB 2598. I request that it be passed out of this Committee.

SB 2598 is an excellent idea and I was pleased to learn of its introduction. The long historical involvement of the African American community in Hawaii is not well known. This is due, in part, to the integration of the early settlers within the Hawaiian community. For example, most people do not know that a significant percentage of the whalers were African American and that many left their ships to live in a free land, the Kingdom of Hawaii. There are many individual stories that can and should be told. Passage of this bill will encourage the sharing of these stories, which illustrates the openness of the Hawaii community.

Thank you for considering this legislation. I encourage you to pass SB 2598.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "St Guttman".

STEVEN GUTTMAN

Roxanne Kamalu

From: Lillian Jones <adaoha1@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 1:06 AM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: senespero@capital.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2598 Hawaii Commission To Preserve the Cultural Heritage of people of African Descent in the Islands

To whom it may concern:

I submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2598 that supports preservation of the cultural heritage of people of African descent in the islands. I am a student and lover of history, because of which my whole world is contextualized and formed. During one of Dr. John Hope Franklin's, author of Mirror to America, visits to the islands, I proudly inquired of him the necessity of teaching "Black History" classes that was debated in the state of Pennsylvania during that time. He stressed the need to incorporate our history into American History. Over time I developed a greater appreciation for his admonition for he did not want our history sequestered in one class that students of other ethnic groups may opt not to take. As a resident of Hawai'i for almost fourteen (14) years, I have become acutely aware of others' lack of awareness of African-Americans' contributions to America and the world in general and in the state of Hawai'i specifically. I have increased my knowledge of African-Americans in Hawai'i by reading such books as "And They Came," and "They Followed the Trade Winds," by Dr. Miles Jackson, as well as, Images of African American's in Hawai'i by D. Molentia Guttman. When encountering local African-Americans and visitors to the island, they are often surprised and fascinated by the history. People of other ethnicities are fascinated and enlightened as well regarding the breadth of contributions of the people of African descent for well over two centuries. Hence, I am interested in extending and making more visible the contributions of African-Americans in Hawai'i. Therefore I greatly support passage of Bill 2598 to preserve the cultural heritage of people of African descent in the islands.

Respectfully submitted,
Lillian Jones

LATE

Roxanne Kamalu

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 12:42 AM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: ekandagawa@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2598 on Mar 12, 2014 08:30AM*

SB2598

Submitted on: 3/12/2014

Testimony for VMI on Mar 12, 2014 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Emily Kandagawa	Individual	Support	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.

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