



February 24, 2014

Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair

Clarence K. Nishihama, Vice Chair Committee on Technology And The Arts

RE: Strong Support for Senate Bill 2598 Relating To The Cultural Exchanges Between Hawaii And African Americans.

Dear Senators,

I am a resident of the great State of Hawaii who happens to be of African American ancestry. While growing up in Hawaii has been an amazing experience that has influenced the way that I view the world it has also been limited in its representation of the cultural contributions put forth by African Americans and others of African decent who have made Hawaii their home since the end of the 18th century. I believe that Senate Bill 2598 offers the unique opportunity to show that African Americans in Hawaii are not simply a unique cultural group, but a key part of Hawaii's history. The contribution of African Americans in Hawaii ranges from the whaling/shipping industry, service to the Hawaiian Monarchy, business ownership, service in the United States Military, right up to the election of our country's first African American President. Senate Bill 2598 also gives keiki of African American/African decent a historical touch stone for their place in Hawaii's past as well as it's future! **I strongly support Senate Bill 2598 Relating To The Cultural Exchanges Between Hawaii And African Americans.**

Mahalo,

Chris Lopa MSW Student, Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, University of Hawaii at Manoa