



Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs

P. O. Box 1135
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96807

SENATE BILL 317 RELATING TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
SENATE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS**

Friday, 2/07/14; 3:15 pm; Room 224

Aloha Madam Chair Shimabukuro of the Senate Hawaiian Affairs Committee, Chairman Wakai of the Committee on Technology and the Arts and members of the joint committee. I am Soulee Stroud, president of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs here to testify in support of SB bill 317 to establish "Indigenous Peoples' Day" here in Hawaii.

As an organization established by, for and consisting of the native people of Hawaii, we are pleased to add our support to a bill that would set aside a day to remember our roots, and for the acknowledgement by others also.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Contact: jalna.keala2@hawaiiantel.net

February 5, 2014

Anthony Castanha, Ph.D.
Department of Ethnic Studies
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Re: SB 317 - Testimony to Support Legislation that Redesignates "Discoverers' Day" in Hawai'i to "Indigenous Peoples' Day"

Aloha kakou and guatiao,

I would like to thank the committee very much for taking up and allowing this legislation to be heard. My name is Tony Castanha. I am a lecturer of Indigenous and American Indian Studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and a lead advocate for the passage of this bill. I am also the coordinator of the annual Indigenous Peoples' Day gathering that began here in Hawai'i in 1997 and meets on or around October 12. This educational event builds awareness of indigenous rights issues taking place in Hawai'i and abroad and how the fifteenth century concept of discovery still influences society today.

I realize the good intentions displayed when the name "Columbus Day" was changed to "Discoverers' Day" back in 1988. The Hawaiians or Polynesians were great voyagers and perhaps the greatest ever. Their accomplishments are not disputed and marveled at by many. They should be honored in many ways. However one dilemma with the name "Discoverers' Day" is the public perception that the day is a celebration or recognition of European accomplishments. It is also observed at the same time "Columbus Day" is federally recognized in the United States. October 12 is of course the day Columbus was thought to have "discovered" America. Captain Cook is likewise still believed by many to have "discovered" the Hawaiian Islands. These myths of Euro-American history are unfortunately still advanced in our schools and taught to our children.

Another perhaps more important problem with the term and concept of discovery is that historically it came to form the basis of European treaties and laws that legally sanctioned the subjugation of non-Christian peoples and allowed for the seizure of their lands. As it turned out, indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, Africa, the Pacific, and in parts of Europe and Asia, bore the brunt European imperialism. Tens of millions of people perished in the process. The discovery principal is also not a thing of the past as it became encoded into international and national laws and policies and is still institutionally detrimental to indigenous populations. This is clearly evident in the landmark 1823 Johnson v. McIntosh case, which along with similar court decisions forms the basis of U.S. federal Indian law today. This law is grounded in the sixteenth century "doctrine of discovery." The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has in recent years closely examined the contemporary effects of the discovery doctrine in relation to many problems indigenous peoples continue to face. A preliminary study by the Forum in 2010 found:

This preliminary study establishes that the Doctrine of Discovery has been institutionalized in law and policy, on national and international levels, and lies at the root of the violations of indigenous peoples' human rights, both individual and collective. This has resulted in state claims to and the mass appropriation of the lands, territories, and resources of indigenous peoples. Both the Doctrine of Discovery and a holistic structure that we term the Framework of Dominance have resulted in centuries of virtually unlimited resource extraction from the traditional territories of indigenous peoples. This, in turn, has resulted in the dispossession and impoverishment of indigenous peoples, and the host of problems that they face today on a daily basis.¹

In closing, while some may see the changing of the name of a day, like the changing of a street name or building, somewhat frivolous, the process of naming is substantive and the names we assign in the public sphere are important because they carry meaning and symbolize the values we place on our society. Changing the name of this day to Indigenous Peoples' Day would demonstrate an important solidarity between the Kanaka Maoli first peoples of these islands and indigenous peoples around the world. I would finally like to suggest a couple of changes under the recognition part of the bill.

“Indigenous Peoples’ Day. The second Monday in October shall be known as Indigenous Peoples’ Day, in recognition of the:

- (1) Polynesian [founders] of the Hawaiian Islands;
- (2) Accomplishments of the indigenous voyagers who founded and settled the myriad islands of the Pacific Ocean more than one thousand years before Columbus was born; and
- (3) Countless indigenous peoples who perished [worldwide] as a result of confrontations between indigenous peoples and Europeans, [along with the survival of their descendants.]

Mahalo nui loa & sincerely,

Anthony Castanha

¹Tonya Gonnella Frichner, “Impact on Indigenous Peoples of the International Legal construct known as the Doctrine of Discovery, which has served as the Foundation of the Violation of their Human Rights,” 1-2 United Nations Economic and Social Council, Presented at Ninth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, April 19-30, 2010.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [HWNTestimony](#)
Cc: rittew@hotmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB317 on Feb 7, 2014 15:15PM
Date: Thursday, February 06, 2014 7:08:46 AM

SB317

Submitted on: 2/6/2014

Testimony for HWN/TEC on Feb 7, 2014 15:15PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Walter Ritte	Individual	Support	No

Comments: My name is Walter Ritte from the island of Molokai and I am in support of SB 317. It is critical that the wrongs of the past are made right before we can move forward as a people in Hawaii. This bill will help us shine the light on the events of the past that needs to be accepted and corrected.

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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From: [Ardaga Widor](#)
To: [HWNTestimony](#)
Subject: Enough of foul (language) "discoveries" and racial supremacist tradition
Date: Thursday, February 06, 2014 3:27:05 AM

To whom it may concern:

It is with both full agreement and deep empirical understanding that I support the efforts of truthful Hawaiian people to abandon Discoverer's Day for a more adequate Indigenous Day. You cannot honestly combat much less win over racism (and all its horrible and self-repeating consequences throughout the last millennium) as long as you keep racist language and traditions alive.

One World - Many Cultures - One Love
Greetings from Ardaga C. Widor aka Huup-té Dschaam Dscheu
Brazil

From: [Joanna \(Aya\) Soto-Aviles](#)
To: [HWNTestimony](#)
Subject: Testimony for SB317 - RELATING TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY
Date: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 8:21:25 PM
Importance: High

Aloha, Takahi [*Greetings*],

I want to thank you very much for taking up and allowing this issue to be heard. My name is Aya and my "legal" name is Joanna Soto-Aviles. I am an Elder of my family's "Iukayeke" [*Clan*], "Iukayeke Agüeyní" [*Sun-Water Clan*] as well as a Grandmother on the Grandmother Council of the Bohío Atabei Indigenous Women's Circle. I am also a member of the United Confederation of Taíno People (UCTP).

Speaking for myself as an Indigenous Taíno Boricua woman, my family and I understand that the use of words and names carry important meaning and have energy, and they symbolize the values we hold within our society. The name "Discoverers' Day" in Hawai'i unwittingly reflects and condones a history based on subjugation and genocide, and ignores the catastrophic destruction brought to Indigenous societies flourishing within the Americas prior to the arrival of these "discoverers". The fifteenth century Western concept of "discovery" established Christian dominion over non-Christians which allowed for their enslavement, their exploitation, genocide, and the taking of their lands. Countless numbers of Indigenous Peoples subsequently perished worldwide as a result of the European "discovery", colonization, exploitation and genocide process. Today, an increasing number of American states, cities, local governments, and institutions have renamed or abolished "Columbus Day" which is synonymous with the concept of "discovery," loss of basic human rights, exploitation, violence, rape, murder, genocide, and the recognition of a "Discoverers' Day."

My family and I, therefore, urge you to change the name of this day in Hawai'i to "INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY" to support and stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples around the world, especially the Native Hawaiians who were the original inhabitants of the Hawaiian islands and who have survived the Indigenous-European confrontation referred to as "discovery", as well as to support and uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This gesture will be a small step towards honoring, healing and making peace with the Indigenous Hawaiian People who were the Original People and First Nation who discovered and cared for the land, and whose Indigenous descendants today continue to care for and protect the land, their culture and traditions. I urge you to support and pass Bill #SB317.

Hahom [*Thank you*] for considering my testimony on this important issue.

May Creator and the Ancestors Bless and Guide you, now and always... Seneko Kakona [*Abundant Blessings*]...

Oma' Bahari [*Respectfully*] and Sincerely,
In the Spirit of the Ancestors,

Joanna 'Aya' Soto-Avilés

From: [john f martinez](#)
To: [HWNTestimony](#)
Subject: Aloha
Date: Thursday, February 06, 2014 8:56:38 AM

Aloha:

The use of names carries important meaning and symbolizes the values we place on our society. The name “Discoverers’ Day” in Hawai‘i unwittingly reflects and condones a history based on deception. The fifteenth century Western concept of discovery established and legalized Christian dominion over non-Christians that allowed for their subjugation and the taking of their lands. Countless numbers of indigenous peoples perished worldwide as a result of the European “discovery” and colonization process. As a similar fate was bestowed upon the Hawaiian Islands and Captain Cook is still thought of by many as the “discoverer” of Hawai‘i, who are we really honoring on this day? Today, an increasing number of American states, cities, local governments, and institutions have renamed or abolished “Columbus Day,” which is synonymous with the concept of discovery and recognized on the same day as “Discoverers’ Day” in Hawai‘i. Therefore, it is requested that the name of this day in Hawai‘i be changed to Indigenous Peoples’ Day to recognize, support and stand in solidarity with the Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) people of Hawai‘i and indigenous peoples around the world.

Thank you,

john martinez ~ East Los Angeles CalifAztlan

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [HWNTestimony](#)
Cc: mkhan@hawaiiantel.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB317 on Feb 7, 2014 15:15PM
Date: Wednesday, February 05, 2014 8:05:32 AM

SB317

Submitted on: 2/5/2014

Testimony for HWN/TEC on Feb 7, 2014 15:15PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am writing in support of SB317, Relating to Indigenous People's Day, which re-designates the second Monday of October from "Discoverers' Day" to "Indigenous Peoples' Day." The designation of such a day and with the support of the Dept of Education would help to bring attention to the correct, true history of Hawaii, its indigenous people, and its culture.

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