

Written Statement of Seibert Murphy, CEO, Guide Star Engineering, Kapolei

Before the  
**Senate Ways and Means Committee**

February 25, 2015

**In Support of HI SB 194 Relating to Commission on African American History and Culture**

Honorable Chair Tokadu, Vice Chair Kouchi and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB 194**, which would Establish a Commission on African American History and Culture to recognize the contributions of the people of African descent in Hawaii. I strongly believe that establishing this committee provides a long overdue recognition of kapuna of African descent in our beautiful state.

We are all aware of our favorite son Barrack Obama, the President of the United States of America. How many of us know that Alice Augusta Ball was the first woman to graduate from the College of Hawaii (now the University of Hawaii) in 1915 with a master's degree in science (chemistry). She was the first African American research chemist and instructor in the college's chemistry department. Alice Ball was also the first person to successfully develop a water-soluble, injectable form of chaulmoogra oil that was used for decades to relieve the symptoms of Hansen's disease (leprosy). How many others have come to share their knowledge and energy to help build homes, make friends and raise families in the spirit of aloha?

My personal story of first coming to these islands almost forty years ago has resulted in the joy of raising a family that loves this place and the spirit that I first encountered.

I look forward to working with the Hawaii Commission on African American History and Culture. And to help that committee educate residents and visitors to our State about the many important contributions of people of African descent so that we all recognize them as a source of experience, knowledge, guidance, strength and inspiration to the next generations.

This is why **I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB 194**.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Seibert Murphy

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 194, SD1, RELATING TO THE CULTURAL  
EXCHANGES BETWEEN HAWAII AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BY

CARSWELL J. ROSS, JR. Chief Master Sergeant, USAF. Ret.;  
Counselor Emeritus, Office of Veterans' Services

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Good morning Chair Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair Ronald Kouchi and members of the Committee on Ways and Means. I **strongly support** SB194, SD1 which seeks to establish the Hawaii commission on African American History and Culture to recognize the contributions of the African American people in Hawaii and educated residents and visitors to the State about these contributions.

I have lived in the State of Hawaii for nearly 45 years. I attended College in Hawaii and graduated from Leeward Community College and the University of Hawaii. As a long term resident I became aware that about two percent of the Hawaii community were African Americans, yet I have heard stories from many about how a boat load of African Americans were brought to Hawaii to vote for the Grand Old Party, how individuals of African American decent vanished in the poly-genetic of Hawaii. Never the less there were many professionals within the African American community who shared their leadership skills and incites with other cultures. The idea of understanding what contributions African Americans have made to Hawaii is very important, not only for today, as the place where the first African American President was born and raised, but to the tomorrows where children of all races can proudly incorporate their African American roots alongside their other ethnic identities.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **support** of SB 194, SD1.

**SB194**

Submitted on: 2/23/2015

Testimony for WAM on Feb 25, 2015 09:00AM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Senator Jill N. Tokuda Chair

Senator Ronald D. Kouchi Vice Chair

Committee on Ways and Means

SB194 SD1

2/25/2015, 9 am, Room 211

Chair Tokuda and members of the committee, I am Keith Burton, a Junior in the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, and I am grateful for this opportunity to provide testimony on S.B. 194. I support the purpose and intent of this measure, and the amended process of assembling an eleven member Commission on African American History and Culture.

Being born and raised in Hawaii, and being currently educated in Social Work, I have come to appreciate diversity, and the addition of a Commission on African American History and Culture will only benefit our understanding of a history and culture we know so little about. I am unenlightened of the contributions of African Americans in Hawaii. The subject of African Americans in Hawaii has not been incorporated into my academic journey thus far. The racial divides in Hawaii also adds to my ignorance. African Americans only make up 4% of our states population, and within my 32 years spent living in Oahu, I have only personally known 5 people of African American ancestry.

I am eager to learn about the African American culture, and history of contributions to our state. I am in support of S.B. 194. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Keith Burton  
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