

SCR119

Testimony

Measure Title: URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA TO
FUND AND FILL THE VACANT AFRICAN AMERICAN
STUDIES FACULTY TENURE LINE POSITION AT THE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES.

Report Title: University of Hawaii at Manoa; African Americans

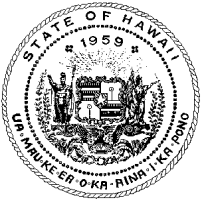
Description:

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: HEA, WAM

Introducer(s): TANIGUCHI



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 HONOLULU, HI 96813 · PHONE: 586-8636 FAX: 586-8655 TDD: 568-8692

March 29, 2016
Rm. 224, 1:15 p.m.

To: The Honorable Brian Taniguchi, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and the Arts

From: Linda Hamilton Krieger, Chair
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: S.C.R. No. 119 / S.R. No. 9

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai‘i’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5.

S.C.R. No. 119 / S.R. No. 9, urges the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa to fund and fill a vacant African American Studies faculty tenure line position in the College of Social Sciences, Department of Ethnic Studies. The HCRC supports S.C.R. No. 119 / S.R. No. 9.

It is our understanding that the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Social Sciences has not approved repeated requests from the Department of Ethnic Studies (ES) to fill a faculty position dedicated to African American history and contemporary issues, vacant since the 2013 departure of the tenured incumbent. This is cause for great concern, and the UHM College of Social Sciences should carefully consider the import of this decision and action. For the reasons discussed below, it is critical that African American history be included and integrated in ES curricula, not just addressed separately elsewhere in other departments.

Hawai‘i has a proud civil rights history of our own, and a civil rights movement that paralleled the civil rights movement on the US continent.

We have a history of race and ethnicity-based occupational stratification with roots deep in the plantation system, and segregation in housing (segregated plantation camps and segregated neighborhoods, reinforced by restrictive covenants), education (segregation implemented through exclusive private institutions and the English Standard system), and segregated clubs (*e.g.*, the Pacific Club infamously denying sitting Supreme Court Justice Masaji Marumoto’s bid to become its first Asian member in 1963). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were

several high profile criminal cases that taught the lesson that in Hawai‘i, the quality of justice a person was entitled to depended on their race. (*e.g.*, the *Goto*, *Fukunaga*, and *Massie* cases).

This history of discrimination and injustice gave rise to Hawai‘i’s civil rights movement, directly tied to the progress of organized labor and the ILWU, who in efforts to organize plantation workers won and secured the right to vote, the right to assemble and associate, the right to trial by jury of peers, and the rights to free speech and due process. In the Constitutional Convention of 1950, a civil rights provision was adopted, providing that no person “... shall be denied enjoyment of the person’s civil rights or be discriminated against in the exercise thereof because of race, religion, sex, or ancestry.” This civil rights provision can still be found in the Hawai‘i State Constitution, in Article I, §5. And, Hawai‘i’s state fair employment law was enacted in 1963, the year before the enactment of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

This brief recitation of Hawai‘i civil rights history is not offered to illustrate that it is separate from the US Civil Rights Movement that dates back to slavery, emancipation, and Jim Crow, and continues through the present. It is offered to show that our struggles for justice and equality are related, contemporaneous, and inextricably linked. Our Hawai‘i civil rights movement would not have been, but for the African American civil rights struggle.

This is what Ethnic Studies teaches us. “Our History, Our Way,” is more than a slogan. It reflects that learning this integrated history is empowering in a very real way. ES teaches us that slavery was related to the contract labor system, and that both were outlawed by the 13th amendment prohibition against slavery and peonage. By teaching history as an integrated whole, that context gives meaning to both histories; the civil rights movement is not something remote, something that happened far away and long ago. This opens our eyes to critical analysis of current discrimination issues, income and social inequality, police violence against minorities, anti-Muslim hysteria, and Native Hawaiian claims. This invites college students to engage in critical thinking and analysis.

Finally, it is important that African American history be included in ES. UH ES is a pioneer among ethnic studies programs nationwide, one of the first and the few that include all these histories in and integrated ethnic studies department, rather than separated into smaller parts (Black Studies, Latino Studies, Asian American Studies, etc.) that can be more easily pitted against each other and dismantled. This has inured to the benefit of generations of Hawai‘i leaders who are products of ES, dating back to the 1970s. No doubt, these community leaders will come forward to support ES in the face of proposed actions to diminish or dismantle it as a viable and valuable UHM asset.

Thank you for your consideration.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [HEA Testimony](#)
Cc: dylanarm@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SCR119 on Mar 29, 2016 13:15PM*
Date: Monday, March 28, 2016 6:39:20 AM

SCR119

Submitted on: 3/28/2016

Testimony for HEA on Mar 29, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Subject: *Submitted testimony for SCR119 on Mar 29, 2016 13:15PM*
Date: Sunday, March 27, 2016 7:42:20 AM

SCR119

Submitted on: 3/27/2016

Testimony for HEA on Mar 29, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Terrell Trice	NuWayve Unlimited	Support	No

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Date: Thursday, March 24, 2016 7:00:51 PM

SCR119

Submitted on: 3/24/2016

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

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