



Hawaii
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

Re: **HCR11 / HR12 - Requesting the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women to Convene a Task Force to Study Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls**
Hawai'i State Capitol, via videoconference, room 329
March 23, 2021, 9:00 AM

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and committee members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in SUPPORT of HCR11 / HR12. These resolutions request the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women to convene a task force to study missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls.

Before reports on sex trafficking in Hawai'i were published, very few people thought sex trafficking was a problem here. The studies revealed just how large the problem is and started our community dialoguing on what we need to do to protect the lives of women and girls.

In addition, this month's *Data Justice* report¹ by Papa Ola Lokahi, a Native Hawaiian health advocacy organization, and the Hawai'i Budget & Policy Center highlighted the lack of adequate data about the Native Hawaiian community and called for the state to improve its collection of ethnic and racial data.

Similarly, at this time we do not have information on missing and murdered indigenous girls and women (MMIWG). The task force requested by this resolution would be an important first step toward filling these gaps in data about Native Hawaiian women and girls.

However, we do know that rates of gender-based violence are higher for indigenous women. We know that Native Hawaiian women are more economically vulnerable because of inequity in their pay. We know that trafficking is a contributing factor to MMIWG. We need better information to learn where we our failing indigenous girls and women so that we may, as a community, better protect them.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass HCR11 / HR12.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director, Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://www.hibudget.org/projects/data-justice>

HR-12

Submitted on: 3/19/2021 4:41:19 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Nikki-Ann Yee | Ma'i Movement Hawai'i | Support | No |

Comments:

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i submits testimony in support of HR 12, which requests the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women to convene a task force to conduct a study on missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls and to submit a report on the study to the Legislature.

As Native Hawaiian women born and raised on Hawaiian homelands in Waimanalo, we have seen and experienced first hand the struggles of our people. Women's advocacy in Hawai'i has not adequately addressed the unique experiences of Native Hawaiian women and we have the opportunity to do that now. Native Hawaiians have continuously outnumbered other race groups in ongoing inequities on various measurements across the board. As such, Ma'i Movement Hawai'i supports this legislation as an important step to acknowledge these inequities and do something about it.



HCR11/HR12

REQUESTING THE HAWAI‘I STATE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY MISSING AND MURDERED NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ke Kōmike Hale o ke Olakino, ka Lawelawe Kānaka, a me ka Pilikia Ho‘okuewa
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

Malaki 23, 2021

9:00 a.m.

Lumi 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs **SUPPORTS** HCR11/HR12. Particularly given recent indications that Native Hawaiians may be disproportionately represented among sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and sex abuse victims – who in turn may be at a heightened risk of being murdered or going missing – **OHA supports the improved data collection, reporting, and analyses envisioned in this measure, as a critical first step to identifying and preventing what may be a serious problem affecting the Native Hawaiian community.**

Recent data indicate that Native Hawaiian women and girls may be disproportionately represented among victims of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.¹ Most recently, the Hawai‘i Commission on the Status of Women, in partnership with Arizona State University and Child and Family Services, published the third part of a multi-part report examining sex trafficking in Hawai‘i. Although the survey underlying this most recent publication could rely on only a limited sample of 363 willing participants, nearly 27% of participants surveyed were identified as having been sexually trafficked, with 64% of these trafficking victims identifying as Native Hawaiian.² Alarming, 23% of the trafficking victims were first trafficked before the age of 18.³

This recent report supplements data that further demonstrate the high risk for sexual victimization within the Native Hawaiian community. For example, the Sex Abuse Treatment Center has indicated that, between 2001 and 2010, Native Hawaiians represented the largest ethnic group among their intake of sex abuse victims.⁴ Further, a more recent OHA study also revealed that Native Hawaiian girls are vastly overrepresented among juvenile runaways,⁵ and data show that one third of runaway

¹ ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF SEX TRAFFICKING INTERVENTION & THE HAWAI‘I STATE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, SEX TRAFFICKING IN HAWAI‘I PART III: SEX TRAFFICKING EXPERIENCES ACROSS HAWAI‘I 5 (2020).

² *Id.* at 4.

³ *Id.*

⁴ DAWNA NELSON, EVELYN YANAGIDA & CAROL PLUMMER SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS IN HONOLULU: A 2001-2010 STATISTICAL PROFILE 24 (2012).

⁵ OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, HAUMEA: TRANSFORMING THE HEALTH OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN AND EMPOWERING WĀHINE WELL-BEING 74 (2018).

youth will be approached for sexual services within 48 hours of being on the street.⁶ In addition to—and perhaps partially due to—“land dispossession, exposure to sexual violence, hypersexualization, incarceration, cultural dislocation, intergenerational trauma, mental and emotional distress, racism, poverty, and going inequities”⁷—Native Hawaiian youth may, therefore, be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.

The potential prevalence of sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse of Native Hawaiians heightens concerns that Native Hawaiians, and particularly Native Hawaiian women and girls, may be at a higher risk of being murdered or going missing. However, as described in OHA’s report *Haumea: Transforming the Health of Native Hawaiian Women and Empowering Wāhine Well-Being*, there is a need for much better data collection generally on violence perpetrated against Native Hawaiian women, especially young women and girls, including through data disaggregated by age, race, and gender. Such data may be critical to better understanding and addressing the social and systemic contexts of violence against Native Hawaiian women and girls, including their murder or disappearance.⁸

OHA looks forward to participating in this Task Force to better protect and uplift the most vulnerable of Native Hawaiian women and girls. **OHA accordingly appreciates and supports the improved data collection, reporting, and analyses envisioned by this measure, which constitute critical first steps to understanding and addressing the potentially heightened risk of Native Hawaiian women and girls going missing, being murdered, or being otherwise subjected to violence or abuse.**

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** HCR11/HR12. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

⁶ Ho‘ōla Nā Pua, *Re/imagine: A Capital Campaign to Rebuild Pearl Haven*, <https://hoolanapua.org/re-imagine/> (last accessed Feb. 3, 2020).

⁷ ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF SEX TRAFFICKING INTERVENTION & THE HAWAI‘I STATE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, *SEX TRAFFICKING IN HAWAI‘I PART II THE STORIES OF SURVIVORS* 9 (2019).

⁸ THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS HAUMEA: *TRANSFORMING THE HEALTH OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN AND EMPOWERING WĀHINE WELL-BEING* 7, 84 (2018).

HR-12

Submitted on: 3/21/2021 2:58:07 PM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Laurie Field | Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii | Support | No |

Comments:

Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii supports HR 12. Thank you!