

HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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

March 31, 2021
Rm. 308, 1:30 p.m.
via Videoconference

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Liann Ebesugawa, Chair
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: S.B. No. 939, H.D.1

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.B. No. 939, H.D.1, would designate June 19 of each year as Juneteenth to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States. Juneteenth is the day that the news of emancipation reached the last state, Texas, in 1866, over two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. The measure does not make Juneteenth a state holiday.

HCRC supports this measure. Juneteenth is a historical day for both African Americans and the country as a whole. It also shows how justice has been delayed for Black people. Considerable barriers remain for racial equality, and commemoration of Juneteenth is a step towards recognizing that.

The HCRC supports S.B. No. 939, H.D.1.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Arryl Kaneshiro, Chair
Mason K. Chock, Vice Chair
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Bill DeCosta
Luke A. Evslin
KipuKai Kualii



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

LATE

March 30, 2021

**TESTIMONY OF FELICIA COWDEN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
SB 939, HD1, RELATING TO JUNETEENTH DAY
Senate Committee on Finance
Wednesday, March 31, 2021
1:30 p.m.
Via Videoconference
Conference Room 308**

Dear Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of SB 939, HD1, Relating to Juneteenth Day. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a Member of the Kaua'i County Council.

SB 939, HD1, proposes to create an official day of observance for Juneteenth to commemorate the end of Slavery in the United States and to honor the significant role that African Americans have contributed to the strength of this country. As this will not be a State holiday, it will require no expense. Hawai'i would be well served to join the other 47 states that recognize June 19th as an important commemoration for a shift to furthering a more fair and equitable treatment of this ethnic group that played a painful and profound role in the formulation of the United States. While our black population is relatively small in Hawai'i, this perhaps creates greater importance that this part of our ethnic family understands they are valued and fully respected in Hawai'i Nei.

Mahalo for considering my testimony and the work on this important bill. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via E-mail to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

FELICIA COWDEN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AMK:dmc



Young Progressives Demanding Action
P.O. Box 11105
Honolulu, HI 96828

March 29, 2021

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
RE: Testimony in Support of SB939 HD1

Dear Representatives,

Young Progressives Demanding Action **strongly supports SB939 HD1**. It is way past time for Hawai'i to join the 47 other states that honor this important day. Juneteenth, also known as "Freedom Day," commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States on June 19, 1865. North Dakota, South Dakota and Hawai'i are the only states that do not celebrate Juneteenth. "The Aloha State" should acknowledge this historic and longstanding holiday.

Hawai'i has a proud history of being on the forefront of racial and social justice. As early as 1852 the Kingdom of Hawai'i wrote into law that "Slavery shall, under no circumstances whatsoever, be tolerated in the Hawaiian Islands; whenever a slave shall enter Hawaiian territory he shall be free, no person who imports a slave or slaves, into the King's dominions shall ever enjoy any civil or political rights."

Rightfully recognizing Juneteenth will not only uphold this legacy, but will also send a message of solidarity to all of Hawai'i's African-American community members.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Will Caron
Board President & Secretary
action@ypdahawaii.org

SB-939-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2021 5:16:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2021 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Rainbow Family 808	Support	No

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 Strongly supports the formal recognition of June 19th of each year as Juneteenth.

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Secretary/Board Member

SB-939-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2021 5:36:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2021 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Golojuch Jr	LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

The LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, Hawaii's oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization, fully supports SB 939 HD1.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.

Chair

LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Statement Before The
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Wednesday, March 31, 2021
1:30 PM
Via Video Conference, Conference Room 308

SB 939, HD1
RELATING TO JUNETEENTH DAY.

Chair LUKE, Vice Chair CULLEN, and Members of the House Finance Committee

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB 939, HD1, which establishes June 19 of each year as Juneteenth.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. We work to promote equal rights, opportunity, and representation for all.

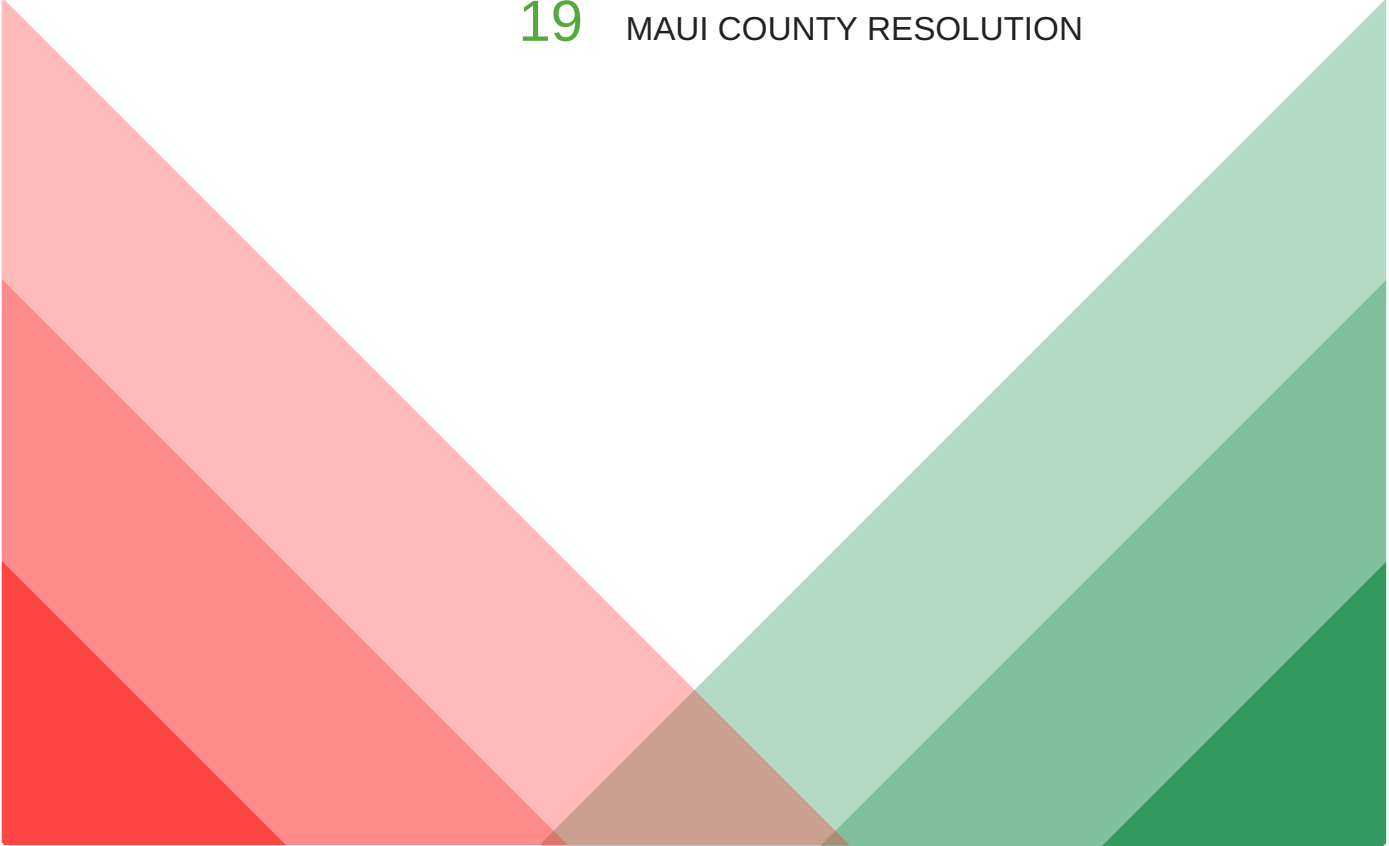
SB 939, HD1 will recognize the importance of Juneteenth in American history. Even with the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that as of January 1, 1863, all enslaved people in the states currently engaged in rebellion against the Union “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free”, and the Civil War’s end in May 1865, confederate states still kept people enslaved. Union troops did not reach the westernmost confederate state of Texas, until June 19, 1865, which became known as Juneteenth, to end slavery. Juneteenth commemorates the freedom that this nation is still striving to achieve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 939, HD1. If you have further questions of me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

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March 30, 2021

Hawai'i State Capitol Building
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Committee Members:

This past June 47 states across the country celebrated *Juneteenth*, also known as Freedom Day, which commemorates June 19, 1865 - the end of African American enslavement in the United States. Sadly, Hawai'i was not one of them.

While communities across the island chain independently honor this historic day by participating in marches and rallies, Hawai'i remains just 1 of 3 states that does not designate Juneteenth as a state holiday. We implore the Hawai'i State Legislature to join the rest of the country by passing SB 939, legislation that will finally recognize this monumental day as a *Day of Remembrance*.

Municipalities across Hawaii have already passed resolutions that mark *Juneteenth* as a local day of remembrance, including the City of Honolulu whose city council unanimously passed a resolution to make Juneteenth "*an annual day of honor and reflection*". "*I think it's important that we recognize Juneteenth as a time to reflect on the contributions of the black community in Hawai'i, their unique experiences in our nation, and the ways we can engage with our friends, family, and the broader community to dismantle systemic racism,*" said Honolulu Councilmember Tommy Waters. ([KHON2, 6/18/20](#))

Hawai'i has a proud history of being on the forefront of racial and social justice. As early as 1852 the Kingdom of Hawai'i wrote into law that "*Slavery shall, under no circumstances whatsoever, be tolerated in the Hawaiian Islands; whenever a slave shall enter Hawaiian territory he shall be free, no person who imports a slave or slaves, into the King's dominions shall ever enjoy any civil or political rights.*" Today many of our citizens are direct descendants of former slaves. Rightfully recognizing *Juneteenth* will not only uphold their legacy, but will send a message of solidarity to all of Hawai'i's African-American leaders, tourists, businesses and respected community members. Furthermore, a State calendar date will serve to better educate Hawaii's youth on black history and the importance of equality for all.

As a state that prides itself on diversity and inclusivity, it is long overdue for Hawai'i to fully live out the Aloha spirit in this matter by standing with the 47 states that have chosen to make *Juneteenth* an annual day of remembrance and celebration. We urge you to vote "yes" on HB 1308 and SB 939.

Sincerely,

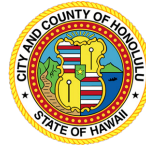
Elected Officials



Councilmember Marcos Pine
(D-1), City & County of
Honolulu



Councilmember Waters (D-4),
City & County of Honolulu



Councilmember
Anderson (D-3), City &
County of Honolulu



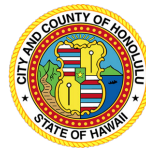
Councilmember Kobayashi (D-
5), City & County of Honolulu



Councilmember Fukunaga (D-
6), City & County of Honolulu



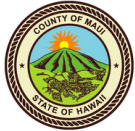
Councilmember Manahan (D-
7), City & County of Honolulu



Councilmember Elefante (D-
8), City & County of Honolulu



Councilmember Paltin,
County of Maui (West
District)



Council Chair, Alice Lee,
County of Maui



Councilmember King,
County of Maui (South
District)



Councilmember
Hokama, County of
Maui



Councilmember
Poindexter (D-1),
County of Hawaii



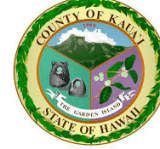
Councilmember
Lehualani Kierkiewicz
(D-4), County of Hawaii



Councilmember David
Maile (D-6), County of
Hawaii



Councilmember Cowden,
County of Kauai



Councilmember Kualii'i,
County of Kauai



Councilmember Evslin,
County of Kauai

Civil Rights Activists & Community Support



Honolulu NAACP



Anti-Defamation League –
Central Pacific Region



Best Buddies Hawaii



Coalition of Black Women
Business Owners on
Hawaii



African Americans
On Maui
Association



Alpha Kappa Alpha - Lambda
Chi Omega Chapter



Hawaii Arts Alliance



African American
Lawyers Association
of Hawaii (AALA)

Educational Support



Kamehameha Schools®



Local Businesses

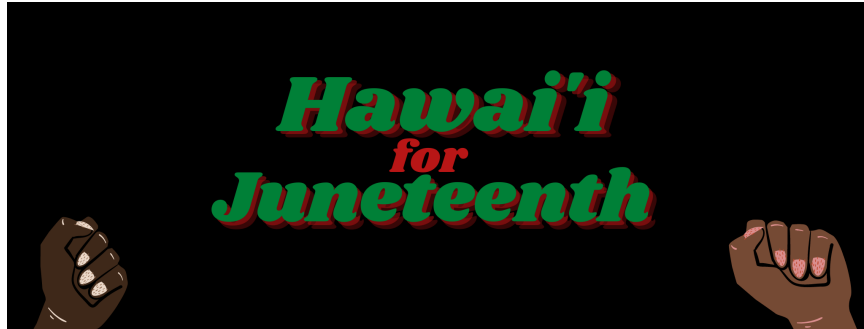


Political Support



HELP MAKE JUNETEENTH A HAWAII STATE HOLIDAY

Hawaii is 1 of only 3 states that does not commemorate Juneteenth as an official State Holiday or Day of Observance (Congressional Research Service)



Only North Dakota, South Dakota and Hawaii do not celebrate Juneteenth. With “*The Aloha State*” being the only Democratic state in the nation yet to acknowledge this historic and longstanding holiday.

WHAT IS JUNETEENTH?

Juneteenth, also known as “Freedom Day”, commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States when on June 19, 1865, Union soldiers arrived to Galveston, TX with news that the war had ended and slaves were now free - two and half years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

Today Juneteenth celebrates African American freedom and achievement, while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all cultures. Currently, Juneteenth has become a national day of pride with 46 states officially commemorating Juneteenth. Sadly, the State of Hawaii is not one of them. This needs to change.

HAWAII MUST ACT NOW

The Hawaii State Legislature should join the rest of the nation by proposing and passing legislation that will finally recognize this monumental day in our country’s history as an official state calendar holiday.

Solidarity

Hawai’i has a proud history of being on the forefront of racial and social justice. As early as 1852 the Kingdom of Hawai’i wrote into law that “*Slavery shall, under no circumstances whatsoever, be tolerated in the Hawaiian Islands; whenever a slave shall enter Hawaiian territory he shall be free, no person who imports a slave or slaves, into the King’s dominions shall ever enjoy any civil or political rights.*”

Today many of our citizens are direct descendants of former slaves. Rightfully recognizing *Juneteenth* will not only uphold their legacy, but will send a message of solidarity to all of Hawai'i's African-American leaders, tourists, businesses and respected community members.

Honoring the History of African American Influence in Hawaii

The sustained and substantial contributions of Hawaii's African American community throughout its history include:

- **Anthony D. Allen:** formerly enslaved, was a steward to King Kamehameha I
- **Oliver & George Washington Hyatt:** served as the first two leaders of the Royal Hawaiian Band under King Kamehameha III
- **Betsey Stockton:** formerly enslaved, started the first mission school in Lahaina open to the common people
- **Buffalo Soldiers:** built the 18-mile trail to the summit of Mauna Loa
- **Alice A. Ball:** a chemist who was the first woman to earn a master's degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and discovered the first treatment for leprosy (the "Ball Method");
- **Dr. Donnis Thompson:** the University of Hawaii's first women's Athletic Director who started the Rainbow Wahine Athletics Program and successful Wahine Volleyball Program
- **Helene Hale:** Hawai's first African-American woman elected to the Hawaii Legislature. She served on the Hawaii County Board of Supervisors. After becoming the first African American Mayor in Hawaii, she was featured on *Ebony Magazine*
- **Carlotta Stewart:** Lawyer who helped Hawaiians regain their kuleana lands. She became the first black principal in Honolulu when she took on the role at Ko'olau Elementary School
- **President Barack Obama:** First African American and first Hawaii born elected President of the United States.

Education

A State calendar date will serve to better educate Hawaii's diverse youth on a monumental event in US history. Battling systemic racism first begins with a fundamental knowledge of our nation's racist history and how it has contributed to the white supremacist framework we see today. Providing today's youth with an accurate telling of history will not only educate them, it will equip them with the necessary information needed to challenge inequality and take steps towards a more inclusive society.

Tourism

Hawaii relies heavily on tourism each year to generate tax revenue. According to the Hawaii Tourism Authority, in 2019, 10,424,995 visitors came to Hawaii. On average, there were 249,021 visitors in the Hawaiian Islands on any given day. Visitors to Hawaii spent \$17.75 billion that generated \$2.07 billion in state tax revenue. ([Hawaiian Tourism Authority, 1/29/20](#))

Large portions of these tourists represent communities of color. If Hawaii expects to continue to attract visitors from around the world, we must live out our promise of celebrating diversity through the celebration of Juneteenth.

WIDESPREAD, GROWING SUPPORT

Honolulu Leads The Way

Communities across Hawaii have already passed resolutions that mark *Juneteenth* as a local day of remembrance and celebration. On 8/18/20, The City of Honolulu unanimously voted to recognize Juneteenth as an official, citywide day of remembrance and observation.

[\(KHON2, 6/18/20\)](#)

"It is important that our City sends a clear signal that we stand in solidarity with the Black community as we all work together for social justice. But it's also important that we celebrate and lift up the contributions and achievements of Black people in Hawaii from the time of the Hawaiian Kingdom to today. Recognizing Juneteenth is a way to do both."

- **Mayor Kirk Caldwell, City & County of Honolulu**

"I think it's important that we recognize Juneteenth as a time to reflect on the contributions of the black community in Hawai'i, their unique experiences in our nation, and the ways we can engage with our friends, family, and the broader community to dismantle systemic racism."

- **Councilmember Tommy Waters (D-4), City & County of Honolulu**

CURRENT SUPPORTERS

A growing coalition of local leaders, nonprofits and advocacy groups are committed to making Juneteenth a State Holiday and are urging the Legislature to act now:

- Honolulu Hawaii NAACP
- Democratic Party of Hawaii– Hawaii County Committee
- ADL - Anti-Defamation League - Central Pacific Region
- Island Black Girlz
- Af3irm - Hawai'i
- African Americans on Maui (AAOMA)
- Dear White Women
- Alpha Kappa Alpha - Lambda Chi Omega Chapter
- Ala Moana Hotel
- African American Lawyers Association

- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
- Time to Talk Hawaii
- Best Buddies Hawaii
- Pride at Work Hawaii
- Ala Moana Hotel
- LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i
- County of Maui (West District) Council Member Paltin
- County of Maui (South District), King
- County of Maui Council Chair Alice Lee
- County of Maui Council Member Hokoma
- City & County of Hawaii, Councilmember, Valerie Poindexter, (D-1)
- City & County of Hawaii, Councilmember, David Maile (D-6)
- City & County of Hawaii, Councilmember, Lehualani Kierkiewicz (D-4)
- City & County of Honolulu, Councilmember, Kym Pine (D-1)
- City & County of Honolulu, Councilmember Anderson (D-3)
- City & County of Honolulu, Councilmember Tommy Waters (D-4)
- City & County of Honolulu, Councilmember Kobayashi (D-5)
- City & County of Honolulu, Councilmember Carol Fukunaga (D-6)
- City & County of Honolulu, Councilmember Manahan (D-7)
- City & County of Honolulu, Councilmember Elefante (D-8)
- Loco Boutique
- Guava Press
- Samantha Neyland, Miss Hawaii USA 2020
- Miss Hawaii USA Pageant Organization

JOIN US: SUPPORT JUNETEENTH

We encourage the State Legislature to draw from existing laws that have already been successfully implemented in 47 states across the country.

While there is a growing movement in other states to provide a paid-day off work for all state employees, we are not advocating that Hawaii do the same at this time. We are simply urging Hawaii Stated elected officials to celebrate Juneteenth with the full and proper acknowledgement our African American community deserves.

As a state that prides itself on diversity and inclusivity, it is long overdue for Hawai'i to fully live out the Aloha spirit by standing with the 47 states that have chosen to make *Juneteenth* an annual day of remembrance and celebration.

MISS HAWAII USA URGES LEGISLATURE TO MAKE JUNETEENTH A STATE HOLIDAY

Hawaii's first African American Miss USA Hawaii is launching a coalition to urge the Hawaii State Legislature to make Juneteenth a state holiday.

Hawaii is just one of four states that do not commemorate Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day. June 19, 1865, was the day that Union soldiers rode into Galveston, Texas, declaring the end of the Civil War and that all slaves were free.

The holiday is a "celebration of African American freedom and achievement, encourages continuous self-development and respect for all cultures," the coalition says in a news release.

"As a state that prides itself on diversity and inclusivity, it is long overdue for the Hawaii Legislature to fully live out the Aloha spirit and stand with the 46 states that have chosen to make Juneteenth an annual day of remembrance and celebration." Miss USA Hawaii Samantha Neyland said in the release.

"Many of our citizens are direct descendants of enslaved African peoples. Rightfully recognizing Juneteenth will send a message of solidarity to all of Hawaii's blacks leaders, tourists, businesses and community members during this very critical moment as we seek to dismantle systematic racism.

Neyland won the 2020 Miss Hawaii USA contest in November and will compete for the Miss USA crown later this year.

The coalition is made up of elected officials, nonprofits and civil-rights activists, including the Anti-Defamation League, LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, the Honolulu NAACP, the African American Association of Maui as well as the majority of the Maui County Council and



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Amya Watson, 11, prints "Black Power" on a poster celebrating Juneteenth during the "Black Joy as Resistance! Juneteenth Celebration" in the historic Farish Street business district in downtown Jackson, Miss., on June 19.

Honolulu City Council members.

Governor David Ige has signed proclamations in recent years to acknowledge Juneteenth, but advocates would like to see more.

"When the Hawaii State Legislature convenes, it's crucial that they send a clear and resolute message of support in solidarity with the African American community by introducing and passing legislation to make Juneteenth a permanent day of commemoration in Hawaii," said City Councilman Tommy Waters.

The coalition points out Hawaii's proud history of being on the forefront of racial and social justice going back to 1852 when the Kingdom of Hawaii wrote into law that "Slavery shall, under no circumstances whatsoever, be tolerated in the Hawaiian Islands; whenever a slave shall enter Hawaiian territory he shall be free, no person who imports a slave or slaves, into the King's dominions shall ever enjoy any civil or political rights."

On Tuesday, the Maui County Council will vote on a resolution that would make Juneteenth a local holiday.



FILE – In this Friday, June 19, 2020 photo, fireworks explode during Juneteenth celebrations above the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in the Brooklyn borough of New York. The Manhattan skyline is seen in the background. They light up the sky in celebration, best known in the U.S. as a way to highlight Independence Day. This year, fireworks aren't being saved for special events. They've become a nightly nuisance from Connecticut to California, angering sleep-deprived citizens and alarming local officials. (AP Photo/John Minchillo, File)

Miss Hawaii USA launches coalition to make Juneteenth a state holiday

HONOLULU (KHON2)

This past June, 46 states across the country celebrated Juneteenth, commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. While communities across the island chain independently honor this historic day through marches and festivals, Hawaii remains just one of four states that does not designate Juneteenth as a state holiday. Miss Hawaii USA plans to change that.

Hawaii's first African-American Miss Hawaii USA, Samantha Neyland, is leading a coalition of advocates who are urging the State Legislature to recognize Juneteenth as an official state holiday.

Juneteenth, also known as "Freedom Day," commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States on June 19, 1865. Today, it is a celebration of African American freedom and achievement, while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all cultures.

"As a state that prides itself on diversity and inclusivity, it is long overdue for the Hawaii Legislature to fully live out the Aloha spirit and stand with the 46 states that have chosen to make Juneteenth an annual day of remembrance and celebration."

- SAMANTHA NEYLAND, MISS HAWAII USA 2020

Neyland also adds that a state calendar date will serve to better educate Hawaii's diverse youth on Black history while celebrating the importance of equality.

The growing coalition is comprised of elected officials, nonprofits and civil-rights activists, including: the Anti-Defamation League, LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, the Honolulu NAACP, the African American Association of Maui as well as the majority of Maui and Honolulu County Council members.

On Tuesday, Aug. 18, the Maui County Council will vote on a resolution that would make Juneteenth a local holiday. Neyland hopes state legislatures will follow suit.

Honolulu to officially recognize Juneteenth

6/18/20

HONOLULU (KHON2)

In a press release, Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell announced that Juneteenth will be officially recognized. The press release is as follows:

“Mayor Kirk Caldwell and the Honolulu City Council worked together today to recognize Juneteenth as an important national day of commemoration and celebration. Mayor Caldwell ordered that Honolulu Hale be illuminated in yellow and black from the evening of Friday, June 19 through Sunday, June 21 in recognition of “Juneteenth” and the Black Lives Matter movement. Earlier today, a key Honolulu City Council committee passed Resolution 20-154, proclaiming June 19 as “Juneteenth” and an annual day of honor and reflection going forward for the City and County of Honolulu.

“It is important that our City sends a clear signal that we stand in solidarity with the Black community as we all work together for social justice,” said Mayor Caldwell. “But it’s also important that we celebrate and lift up the contributions and achievements of Black people in Hawai’i from the time of the Hawaiian Kingdom to today. Recognizing Juneteenth is a way to do both and I’m proud of the way our community has come together and grown stronger in the face of injustice.”

Honolulu City Council Member Tommy Waters, Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Welfare, helped guide a resolution to unanimous approval by the Committee earlier in the afternoon. The resolution highlighted the fact that the Kingdom of Hawai’i had declared that slavery would not be tolerated in any way a full decade before the US Civil War, and the support provided from Hawai’i for Dr. Martin Luther King during the civil rights struggle.

“I think it’s important that we recognize Juneteenth as a time to reflect on the contributions of the black community in Hawai’i, their unique experiences in our nation, and the ways we can engage with our friends, family, and the broader community to dismantle systemic racism,” said Councilmember Waters.

Juneteenth, also known as “Juneteenth Independence Day”, “Emancipation Day”, and “Freedom Day” is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Juneteenth signifies the date June 19, 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston and announced the emancipation of enslaved people in Texas almost two and one-half years after United States President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

“The City and County recognizing not only the presence, but also the contributions of Black residents of Honolulu via the Juneteenth resolution is a significant step,” said Akiemi Glenn, the Executive Director of the Pōpolo Project. “It is also important to note that the City takes this step as the world is erupting in an unprecedented global call for justice for Black people, connecting this moment to 1852 when Hawai’i enshrined in its constitution an affirmation that Black lives matter on this ‘āina because they matter everywhere.”

Texas was the first state to officially recognize Juneteenth in 1980. Today, 49 of the 50 US states recognize Juneteenth as either a state holiday or ceremonial day of observance. The only state that does not yet recognize Juneteenth is Hawai’i, making the resolution passed by the City and County of Honolulu with approximately 70% of the state’s population an important step to finally bringing this day of recognition to the entire nation.

“Millions of Americans are dealing with the pain and agony of systemic racism and civil unrest,” said Alphonso Braggs, President of the Honolulu Hawai’i NAACP. “In Hawaii, it’s comforting to see our local government leaders recognize the importance of celebrating one of the most significant events in African-American history. This year’s celebration includes a renewed commitment to work together on police reform and community building.”

Juneteenth will be recognized on June 19 this year with a sunset ceremony at Makalei Park near Leahi to honor ancestors and those working for a future where every individual is truly free.

The Pōpolo Project is

a Hawai’i-based nonprofit organization that redefines what it means to be Black in Hawai’i and in the world through cultivating radical reconnection to ourselves, our community, our ancestors, and the land. To learn more about the Pōpolo Project, visit thepopoloproject.org.”

Danny De Gracia: It's Time For Hawaii To Officially Recognize Juneteenth

2/8/2021

Hawaii is one of only three states that don't yet officially commemorate Juneteenth, the day that marks the historic end of slavery in the United States.

When Samantha Neyland was crowned Miss Hawaii USA 2020, she saw a unique opportunity to bring people of diverse backgrounds together and do something special for Hawaii.

Neyland brought attention to the Legislature that Hawaii was one of only three states that didn't yet have an official recognition of Juneteenth – June 19 – the day that commemorates the historic end of slavery in the United States.

"I wanted to do something about it," Neyland said in a telephone interview last week.

Hawaii, which has struggled over the years to overcome its complicated history of annexation and plantations, has many ethnic and economic divisions to this day that draw parallels to the plight of African Americans who have been held back by structural or institutional violence.

As a point in case, a report recently released by the Honolulu Police Department showed that even Honolulu had a noticeable difference in the way police used force against Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, and African Americans.

That these three local vulnerable populations are experiencing more stringent treatment from law enforcement in a place like Hawaii highlights the need to ameliorate race relations and change the way we perceive one another.

Recognizing Juneteenth in Hawaii would be one way to bring attention, particularly in public education, to the historical pattern of racial inequality in America, and might be a way to raise keiki who are aware of systemic issues and willing to fix them.

At the Legislature, there are currently four measures that seek to recognize Juneteenth in Hawaii. Senate Bill 16, Relating to State Holidays, introduced by Sen. Stanley Chang, would give local workers another day off to consider the importance of Juneteenth.



"Senate Bill 316, introduced by Sen. Brian Taniguchi, Senate Bill 939, by Sen. Glenn Wakai, and House Bill 1308, by House Vice Speaker John Mizuno, all recognize and commemorate Juneteenth, but do not designate it as a state holiday.

Neyland believes that giving people a symbolic day to reflect on and to study about the past would be a win for Hawaii, because all people, not just African Americans, can understand that freedom is what empowers everyone to accomplish great things.

Mizuno, who authored and introduced the House version in collaboration with Neyland, said that these types of moral "wins" are all the more important when the country is recovering from such a divisive and agonizing experience in the previous election year.

Mizuno said that domestic unrest and economic frustration are things that the Legislature needs to be sensitive to, and giving people a day that represents release from oppression and historic attention to injustice would be useful, even in Hawaii.



As we celebrate Black History Month, it's important to remember that disparities have significant impacts on an entire society," Mizuno said in a telephone interview.

"Celebrating Juneteenth is as much about Black Lives Matter as it is about bringing attention to the disparities between our vulnerable populations that make them more at-risk during the COVID-19 pandemic," he added.

Mizuno, who represents Kalihi Valley, is also acutely aware of the historical link that Filipinos and African Americans have shared. For much of America's history, both population groups were often relegated to menial positions in government and private sector occupations.

Only in the last 50 years have Filipinos and African Americans been able to start to assume more senior or meaningful positions of influence. "The civil rights movement broke the barriers and paved the way for all the other groups," Mizuno said.

I mentioned to Neyland this pattern, and how some of the country's most exceptional people have fought with all their human might for just the right to be considered human among their peers.

"It's important to remember that disparities have significant impacts on an entire society." — House Vice Speaker John Mizuno

When I think of the struggles for respect in America, I think of individuals like Benjamin O. Davis Jr., a Black officer who was appointed to West Point by the only Black member of Congress at the time, Rep. Oscar De Priest. While at the U.S. Military Academy, Davis was intentionally ignored during his four years and no one spoke a word to him at all.

In spite of this prejudice, Davis later became a WWII fighter pilot and a lieutenant general in the Air Force, and is one of many "all-stars" of African American history for his talent and determination.

What has always bothered me is that the individuals we commemorate are often people who succeeded because they were the absolute best-of-the-best. The people whom we don't hear about are the millions of other hard-working, ordinary individuals who never made it because they faced discrimination and were forced out. These people, if given a fair chance, probably would have become great in their fields.

"That's a good point," Neyland told me in response. "And I have always believed that true freedom is the freedom to fail and still be respected as a person. And that's what all this is about. Freedom to be a person; freedom to know that with all your imperfections and all your achievements, you are still always someone worthy of respect."

Now those are words of wisdom we all need to hear in 2021. Neyland's hope to make Juneteenth a recognition of these fundamental truths would be a great credit to both Hawaii and our aloha traditions, should these measures pass. Contact your representatives and senators and tell them you'd like to have a hearing scheduled for these bills. Together we can learn from the past and build a better future.



RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING JUNE 19TH AS JUNETEENTH FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU.

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, also known as "Juneteenth Independence Day," "Emancipation Day," "Emancipation Celebration," and "Freedom Day," is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, a name derived from a portmanteau of the words "June" and "nineteenth," signifies the date June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston and announced the emancipation of enslaved people in Texas, proclaiming General Order No. 3, almost two and one-half years after United States President Abraham Lincoln issued the *Emancipation Proclamation*; and

WHEREAS, the first Black people arrived in the Hawaiian Islands in the early 1800's as deckhands on merchant and whaling ships, and came from Cape Verde, Africa, the Caribbean and the United States. These early Black residents ended their maritime careers and settled in Hawaii, with many of them becoming successful musicians, businessmen, and respected government officials; and

WHEREAS, a decade before the United States Civil War and the *Emancipation Proclamation*, the *Kingdom of Hawaii Constitution of 1852* provided that "Slavery shall, under no circumstances whatsoever, be tolerated in the Hawaiian Islands; whenever a slave shall enter Hawaiian territory he shall be free, no person who imports a slave or slaves, into the King's dominions shall ever enjoy any civil or political rights in this realm"; and

WHEREAS, in 1897, Black citizens of the Kingdom of Hawaii joined Kanaka Maoli in their fight for liberation by signing the Ku'e Petition, protesting the annexation of the Kingdom of Hawaii by the United States; and

WHEREAS, the sustained and substantial contributions of Black people to Hawaii's community throughout its history include: Anthony D. Allen, formerly enslaved, was a steward to King Kamehameha I; Oliver and George Washington Hyatt, served as the first two leaders of the Royal Hawaiian Band under King Kamehameha III; Betsey Stockton, formerly enslaved, started the first mission school in Lahaina open to the common people; Buffalo Soldiers built the 18-mile trail to the summit of Mauna Loa; Alice A. Ball, a chemist who was the first woman to earn a master's degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and discovered the first treatment for leprosy (the "Ball Method"); Dr. Donnis Thompson, the University of Hawaii's first women's athletic director who started the Rainbow Wahine athletics program and successful wahine



RESOLUTION

volleyball program; and many, many more unnamed contributors to Hawaii's excellence and history; and

WHEREAS, the history of the African diaspora in Hawaii and indigenous island communities across the Pacific, have endured shared systemic oppression and adversity, and have exhibited historical solidarity with the civil rights movements in the United States, including multiple visits by Dr. Martin Luther King to Oahu in 1959 and 1964, and with Dr. King and other civil rights leaders symbolic wearing of lei gifted to them by Reverend Abraham Akaka during the historic 1965 civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates Black African-American liberation, their reconnection to family and community, and collective abundance. It is a day, a week, and in some areas, a month, marked with celebrations, guest speakers, picnics, and family gatherings. It is a time for reflection and rejoicing as well as a time for assessment, self-improvement, and planning for the future; and

WHEREAS, our Black community is the current manifestation of their ancestors, continuing to contribute to the betterment of Hawaii as leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, educators, athletes, artists, cultural practitioners, activists, environmentalists, healthcare professionals, scientists, attorneys, and policymakers; and

WHEREAS, there has been an outpouring of aloha from the broader Oahu community to support the peaceful protests and liberation efforts of the "Black Lives Matter" movement in the face of structural and systemic racism in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth remains an important day of observance in the Black community that celebrates resilience and strength, and reminds all people that it is possible to have radical change to oppressive structures of society, affirming the freedom of all humanity; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it proclaims the annual date of June 19th to be "Juneteenth" in the City and County of Honolulu; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Administration is urged to join the Council in recognition of Juneteenth; and



RESOLUTION

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Administration and the people of the City and County of Honolulu are urged to join in celebrating Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the significant role that the Black community has played in the history of the United States and in Hawaii, and how this community has enriched society through its steadfast commitment to promoting unity and equality; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor and the Managing Director.

INTRODUCED BY:

Tommy Waters

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

June 12, 2020
Honolulu, Hawaii

Councilmembers

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII
CERTIFICATE

RESOLUTION 20-154, FD1

Introduced: 06/12/20 By: TOMMY WATERS

Committee: PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELFARE

Title: RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING JUNE 19TH AS JUNETEENTH FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU.

Voting Legend: * = Aye w/Reservations

06/18/20	PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELFARE	CR-164 – RESOLUTION REPORTED OUT OF COMMITTEE FOR ADOPTION. 4 AYES: FUKUNAGA, MENOR, TSUNEYOSHI, WATERS. 1 EXCUSED: MANAHAN.
07/08/20	COUNCIL	AMENDED TO FD1 (OCS2020-0654/6/30/2020 12:42 PM). 9 AYES: ANDERSON, ELEFANTE, FUKUNAGA, KOBAYASHI, MANAHAN, MENOR, PINE, TSUNEYOSHI, WATERS. CR-164 AND RESOLUTION 20-154, FD1 WERE ADOPTED. 9 AYES: ANDERSON, ELEFANTE, FUKUNAGA, KOBAYASHI, MANAHAN, MENOR, PINE, TSUNEYOSHI, WATERS.

I hereby certify that the above is a true record of action by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu on this RESOLUTION.



GLEN I. TAKAHASHI, CITY CLERK



IKAIKA ANDERSON, CHAIR AND PRESIDING OFFICER

Resolution

No. 20-115

RECOGNIZING JUNE 19TH AS JUNETEENTH IN MAUI COUNTY

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, also known as “Juneteenth Independence Day,” “Emancipation Day,” “Emancipation Celebration,” and “Freedom Day,” is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, a name derived from a combination of the words “June” and “nineteenth,” signifies the date June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced the emancipation of enslaved people in the state, proclaiming General Order No. 3 more than two years after United States President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, many of the first Black people to arrive in the Hawaiian Islands came from Cape Verde, Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States in the early 1800s as deckhands on merchant and whaling ships and, after ending their maritime careers, many became leaders here in business, government, and other endeavors; and

WHEREAS, a decade before the United States Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation, Article 12 of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i Constitution of 1852 stated:

Slavery shall, under no circumstances whatever, be tolerated in the Hawaiian Islands: whenever a slave shall enter Hawaiian territory he shall be free; no person who imports a slave, or slaves, into the King's dominions shall ever enjoy any civil or political rights in this realm; but involuntary servitude for the punishment of crime is allowable according to law; and

WHEREAS, in 1897, Black citizens of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i joined Kanaka Maoli in their fight for liberation by signing the Kū‘ē Petition, protesting the annexation of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i by the United States; and

Resolution No. 20-115

WHEREAS, among the many Black people who have made sustained and substantial contributions to Hawai'i's community throughout its history include:

- Anthony D. Allen, steward to King Kamehameha I;
- Oliver and George Washington Hyatt, the first two leaders of the Royal Hawaiian Band under King Kamehameha III;
- Betsey Stockton, founder of the first mission school in Lahaina open to all;
- Alice A. Ball, a chemist who was the first woman to earn a master's degree from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and discovered the first treatment for leprosy, known as the "Ball Method"; and
- Dr. Donnis Thompson, the University of Hawai'i's first women's athletic director, who started the Rainbow Wahine sports program, including the nationally successful volleyball team, and also the State school superintendent; and

WHEREAS, a contingent of the celebrated Buffalo Soldiers built the 18-mile trail to the summit of Mauna Loa;

WHEREAS, the African diaspora and indigenous island communities across the Pacific have exhibited historical solidarity with each other and liberation movements in the United States, as seen by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., future Congressman John Lewis, and other civil rights leaders wearing lei gifted to them by Reverend Abraham Akaka of Hawai'i during the historic 1965 march for voting rights from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, on March 19, 1965, the Maui County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 65-31, introduced by Supervisor Goro Hokama, to denounce the violence used by governmental authorities in Alabama against civil rights demonstrators and urge Hawaii's congressional delegation to support the swift passage of voting rights legislation; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates African-American liberation, their reconnection to family and community, and community abundance and is a time for reflection, rejoicing, assessment, self-improvement, and planning for the future, and has been consistently

Resolution No. 20-115

celebrated in Maui County for more than 20 years under the leadership of the African Americans on Maui Association; and

WHEREAS, there has been an outpouring of aloha from Maui County residents to support the peaceful protests and liberation efforts of the “Black Lives Matter” movement in the face of structural and systemic racism in the United States; and

WHEREAS, “Juneteenth” remains an important day of observance in the Black community that celebrates resilience and strength, and reminds all people that it is possible to have radical change to oppressive structures of society, affirming freedom of all humanity; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it recognizes June 19 as “Juneteenth” in Maui County; and
2. That certified copies be transmitted to Samantha Neyland, Miss Hawai‘i USA 2020; Gwyn Gorg, President, the African Americans on Maui Association; Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent, Hawai‘i State Department of Education; the Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, Senate President, State of Hawai‘i; the Honorable Scott K. Saiki, Speaker of the House, State of Hawai‘i; the Honorable David Y. Ige, Governor, State of Hawai‘i; and the Honorable Michael P. Victorino, Mayor, County of Maui.

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI

WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793

CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION

It is HEREBY CERTIFIED that RESOLUTION NO. 20-115 was adopted by the Council of the County of Maui, State of Hawaii, on the 18th day of August 2020, by the following vote:

MEMBERS	Alice L. LEE Chair	Keani N. W. RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ Vice-Chair	G. Riki HOKAMA	Natalie A. KAMA	Kelly T. KING	Michael J. MOLINA	Tamara A. N. PALTIN	Shane M. SINENCI	Yuki Lei K. SUGIMURA
ROLL CALL	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye



Kathryn L. Kushner

COUNTY CLERK

SB-939-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2021 1:18:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2021 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Samantha Neyland	Hawaii for Juneteenth	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, I'm Samantha Neyland, Miss Hawaii USA 2020 and founder of the Hawaii for Juneteenth Coalition. Please read the following statement written by one of our partners:

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), I write to you in strong support of HB 1308, which would honor June 19 of each year as Juneteenth Day in recognition of the history and legacy of slavery in the United States and in honor of the significant roles and contributions of African Americans in the history of the United States.

Founded in 1913 in response to an escalating climate of antisemitism and bigotry, ADL has since become a leading anti-hate organization. As we work to fulfill our founding mission to "secure justice and fair treatment to all," our ultimate goal is a world in which no group or individual suffers from bias, discrimination, or hate.

[Juneteenth](#), also known as "Juneteenth Independence Day," "Emancipation Day" or "Freedom Day" is an annual holiday celebrating Union General Gordon Granger's arrival in Galveston, Texas. On June 19, 1865, he informed enslaved African Americans that they were free, and the Civil War was won.

General Granger's arrival and announcement put into widespread effect the Emancipation Proclamation, even though it was issued more than two years prior by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. The holiday's name is a port-manto of the words "June" and "nineteenth." North Dakota, South Dakota and Hawai'i are the only states that do not recognize Juneteenth.

The struggle for true racial equity in America is far from over. The legacy of slavery and racism is not a historical event, but a modern-day reality that must continue to be addressed. ADL supports SB 939 as a symbolic, yet significant acknowledgement of past and present bigotry and a step towards a more just and equitable future.

Sincerely, Seth Brysk

Central Pacific, Regional Director, Anti Defamation League

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / kat.caphi@gmail.com



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Rep. Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

1:30 p.m.

LATE

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB 939 HD1 - JUNETEENTH

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai'i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 4,100 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars or under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that 1,075 of Hawai'i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

SB 939 HD1 establishes June 19th as Juneteenth each year. It was on this date in 1865 that Union troops reached the westernmost confederate state of Texas and slavery was 'officially' ended, although the Emancipation Proclamation. This document declared on January 1, 1863 that all enslaved people in the states currently engaged in rebellion against the Union "shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free."

Community Alliance on Prisons supports measures that observe important dates in history. We also strongly assert that slavery has not ended, it has morphed into the prison industrial complex with the same racist structure. Sadly, white supremacy is still ingrained in some as the recent candidacy of a Proud Boy for a seat in the Hawai'i House of Representatives underscores.

We must work together to build a peaceful community where our keiki can run free, our Kupuna are honored for their wisdom, and the spirit of lokahi (unity, harmony) abounds. We urge the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

*The 13th amendment to the constitution of the US which abolished slavery -
did not abolish slavery for those convicted of a crime.*

Angela Davis

SB-939-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2021 2:39:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2021 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Carla Allison and I strongly support SB939 designating June 19 of each year as Juneteenth Day to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States. It is important not only to remember important historical dates but also to highlight history that has been overlooked, ignored or hidden. It is long overdue for Hawai'i to stand with the 47 states and the District of Columbia that have already chosen to make Juneteenth an annual day of remembrance and celebration. Please support SB939. Thank you.

SB-939-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2021 10:02:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2021 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please establish June 19th as Juneteenth Day; It's about time!

Mahalo for allowing me to provide testimony!

Barbara J. Service MSW (ret.)

Senior advocate

SB-939-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2021 10:36:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2021 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT!

SB-939-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2021 10:10:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2021 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Eileen McKee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB939.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Eileen McKee

Kihei

SB-939-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2021 2:56:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2021 1:30:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sam Tanigawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please consider voting in favor of establishing Juneteenth Day in Hawaii and bringing greater recognition to the role of black and African American residents in our community. You have already recieved great testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission, one member of the Honolulu City Council, LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, Common Cause Hawaii, The Popolo Project, Community Alliance on Prisons, African American Lawyers Association of Hawaii, Young Progressives Demanding Action, Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii, Hawaii for Juneteenth, and Our Space. Please stand with the community, with the rest of the country, and pass this measure.

Representative Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair
Representative Matthew S. LoPresti, Vice Chair
Committee on Culture, Arts & International Affairs

LATE

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

Support for S.B. No. 939, HD1, relating to Juneteenth Day

Aloha,

My name is China Moreira and I support S.B. No. 939, HD1, relating to Juneteenth Day.

As a current Master of Social Work student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, I have learned a lot about the heartbreaking history relating to slavery that millions of African Americans have endured. African Americans were unfairly ostracized, stigmatized, condemned to an unfathomable life, and treated with immeasurable disrespect. In this respect, Hawaii should publicly recognize June 19 as Juneteenth day in honor and respect for all African Americans who lived and have been affected by this heinous crime against humanity.

Once again, I am in full support of S.B. No. 939, HD1. Mahalo for giving me this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
China Moreira