



SCR8/SR7

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 ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Kuleana Hawai‘i

Pepeluāli 9, 2021

1:00 p.m.

Hālāwai Keleka‘a‘ike

The Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment Committee of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend that the Board of Trustees **SUPPORT** SCR8/SR7. 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 analysis 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

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).

overrepresented among juvenile runaways,⁵ and data show that one third of runaway 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 accordingly appreciates and supports the improved data collection, reporting, and analysis 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.

OHA fully supports this effort and looks forward to participating in this Task Force to better protect and uplift the most vulnerable of Native Hawaiian women and girls.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** SCR8/SR7. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

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).

LATE

SR-7

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 6:30:03 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/9/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jessica Munoz	Testifying for Ho'ola Na Pua	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Shimabukuro, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Honorable Members,

Ho'Ā• la NÄ• Pua is in support of the convening of a task force within the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women that will study and report on missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls.

We know firsthand that good data is imperative to better understanding of a problem. There is a movement to better track the number of missing and murdered indigenous women globally. Native Hawaiians are currently not counted. As evidenced by the statistics provided in this resolution, Hawaii follows the trend of native trauma we see in other states reporting high numbers of murdered and missing indigenous women and children.

There is a lack of comprehensive state and federal data on missing and murdered indigenous people. Often, these crimes are linked to incidents of sexual violence and human trafficking. Rural areas are harder hit due to unique challenges and complexities of limited resources, and there is a strong sense that in native communities there is an underreporting of cases. Though several state and federal task forces have sprouted nationally dedicated to Native Americans and Alaskan Natives, there has yet to be a focus on Native Hawaiians.

By working together on this task force, the entities involved have the opportunity to identify, understand, and tackle the systemic racial and economic disparities that foster cycles of violence, poverty, and crime so that in addition to reviewing past cases, we can stop future ones from occurring.

We are willing and eager to participate on the task force described in the resolution. We urge the committee to support SR 7 and SCR 8 to prioritize our most vulnerable and exploited populations.

Respectfully,

Ho'Ā• la NĀ• Pua

SR-7

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 7:42:12 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/9/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

As a concerned community member and public health professional, I urge you to pass resolution SR7, which requests to convene a task force to study the issue of missing/murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls. The disparities among this group of people is startling, and it is a matter of both justice and health to better understand and immediately address this preventable crisis.

Please pass SR7.

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

SR-7

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 11:10:49 AM

Testimony for HWN on 2/9/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Patricia Bilyk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

TO: Senator Shimabukuro, Chair and Committee Members of the Hawaiian Affairs Committee

From: Patricia L Bilyk, RN, MPH, MSN

RE: SR 7 Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women to convene a Task Force to Study Missing and Murdered Hawaiian Girls and Women

Date: February 9, 2021 1pm

I am Patricia Bilyk, an advanced practice nurse who has worked in the State of Hawaii for the last 49 years. My specialty area is Maternal Child Health. I have worked in the Public Health sector on every Island.

I stand in Strong Support of SR 7 for the Hawaii Commission on the Status of Women to convene a Task Force to study the incidence and reasons for missing and murdered Hawaiian girls and women in our State, and provide research documented suggestions to this Legislature and community health providers of ways to correct this serious and under reported problem.

I encourage your affirmative action on this important Senate Resolution.

LATE

SR-7

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 1:39:13 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/9/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ann S Freed	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Strong support for these resolutions.