



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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Wednesday, March 23, 2022
Videoconference , 10:40 a.m.
Room 329

To: The Honorable Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair
The Honorable Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Culture, Arts, & International Affairs

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

Re: H.R. 159 / H.C.R. 159

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.

HCRC supports H.R. 159 and H.C.R. 159 which, if passed, would recognize the historic, cultural, and strategic connections among the peoples of Oceania, of which Hawai‘i is a part, and urge greater collaboration and exchange of best practices with government officials of Pacific Island nations, and implementation of programs and training to combat discrimination against Pacific Island communities.

Native Hawaiians are included among the indigenous peoples of Oceania, who share common cultural and linguistic ties. It makes sense to develop these ties that bind the peoples of Oceania, to reduce discrimination that divides and hinders our governments from collaborating to address the most pressing issues of the day that affect Pacific Island nations – rising sea levels,

environmental degradation, mitigation of natural disasters, economic development, managing tourism, access to healthcare, improving healthcare, and promoting indigenous rights.

It is important and appropriate that the Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i recognize the achievements of the indigenous people of the Oceania regions, and that the State of Hawai‘i proactively engage in efforts to combat discrimination against Pacific Island peoples right here at home. **The HCRC supports H.R. 159 and H.C.R. 159.**