

Ka Leo o na Kupa

Preserving and promoting Hawaii's historical language – olelo Kanaka

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Senator Shimabukuro, Chair

Senator Fevella, Vice Chair and

Members: Senator Ihara, Senator Keohokalole, and Senator Richards III

March 11, 2024

RE: Comment **HB2772 HD1**

Me ke aloha mau no ka aina a makou e waiho aku nei i keia mau manao no ka HB2772 HD1 i hoolaha ia maila imua o ka lehulehu. Ke hoomau aku nei no keia ma o ka olelo elua o Hawaii nei.

Ka Leo o na Kupa is a council of native speakers (L1) of Hawaiian language whose main purpose is to preserve, promote and re-establish Hawaii's historical language with its unique world-view, and to support others in the use of this language – the normalization of Hawaiian language in Hawaii.

Ka Leo o na Kupa would like to acknowledge the intent of this **bill, and those in support of it**, to treat Hawaiian language, culture, and history with the respect it deserves as the aboriginal language of Hawaii, and an official language of the State of Hawaii. However, Ka Leo o na Kupa respectfully provides comment in opposition of this bill for the following reasons. The diacritical markings proposed in the bill, are useful for learners of the language that have been taught how to use them to aid with pronunciation, however are not used with any regularity, or need, in the native speaking community. As this bill seeks to standardize language within a government agency, there is an intrinsic formality that is associated with it. Language in these contexts should be tailored to those of a higher proficiency level, and therefore should reflect the language of those at that level, the native speakers whose proficiency is gauged off of. If this bill passes, it would be assumed that phonetic spelling of English words should become the norm as well for government documents and signage. We have heard countless testimonies for the need of diacriticals to help today's speakers and learners pronounce Hawaiian words correctly, and acknowledge the benefits of such in the earlier stages of language development, but we believe efforts like this unintentionally create ceilings that limits us from reaching those higher levels of proficiency. The whole intention of the revitalization of the Hawaiian language is to reclaim as a society those higher levels of proficiency.

No ka pono o ka aina, a no ke ola o ka lahui,


Kahea Faria

HB-2772-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 9:22:19 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mayrose Munar	Testifying for Kaunalewa	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the esteemed Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

Honorable Chair, Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, and distinguished Vice Chair, Senator Kurt Fevella,

As we deliberate on matters crucial to preserving and promoting the Hawaiian language and culture, Kaunalewa respectfully submits testimony regarding the current bill.

The Niihau community has upheld the traditional Hawaiian language through generations. Niihauas are native speakers of the Hawaiian language. Unfortunately, the bill overlooks Niihauans, who should have a say in decisions like this. Ka Leo o na Kupa, representing native speakers from Niihau, should be consulted.

Throughout history, education policies have often aimed to assimilate Hawaiian Peoples into mainstream society, a mark of colonialism. This risked the erosion of culture, languages, identity, and rights. Without input or consent from Hawaiian communities, these policies impose academic methods on the Niihau community and disregard their cultural traditions.

Thank you.

HB-2772-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 10:51:07 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoki Faria	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai no kakou,

I am providing the following testimony based on my 20+ years as an instructor of olelo Hawaii. Modern orthography has been used to help second language learners of Hawaiian (1) pronounce the word when oral examples are lacking, and (2) discern the meaning of a word in print when that oral example is absent as well. This bill is seeking to change the spelling from “Hawaii,” to “Hawai‘i,” and “aina” to “āina.” In both cases the words are high frequency words not only in Hawaiian but in Hawaiian Creole English. The vast majority of residents have some familiarity with these words that enable them to discern the correct meaning and pronunciation without the additions of okina and kahako. In this case a conservative approach would be most appropriate, as these words belong to none other than Kamehameha III himself, and was printed in the newspapers of the time without the okina and kahako. If there is concern about understanding and pronunciation, spelling alone will not fix that problem, but education can. If the State of Hawaii would make the history of that saying a priority and provide a recording of Kamehameha III’s saying being uttered correctly, that should adequately address the unmentioned concerns that may be driving this bill. Kamehameha III was also famous for the promotion of literacy during his reign, taking the time to educate about that immensely important moment in history when he uttered “Ua mau ke ea o ka aina i ka pono” to all who call Hawaii their home is consistent with the spirit of Kamehameha III’s endeavors. Simply changing orthography will not have the intended effect. Please keep the spelling in its original format and provide resources to educate the public about the importance of this saying.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of my testimony.

HB-2772-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 11:19:31 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keokapukoa Kaohelaulii	Individual	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha mai kakou,

My name is Keokapukoa Kaohelaulii, I am 18-years old, and I graduated from Castle High School in May 2023. I am currently a junior at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, majoring in Hawaiian Studies' with the goal of entering their Bachelor in Hawaiian Studies and Master of Education in Teaching (BAM) program in Fall 2024. The BAM program includes a Hawaiian Language Immersion teaching license so that I may continue to promote the Hawaiian language, history and culture as mandated by our State Constitution of 1978 (Article X, Section 4).

My mother is a native speaker of Hawaiian from Niihau, and my ohana do not utilize this modern orthography that is meant to serve as training wheels to help folks learn Hawaiian. Like training wheels, the diacritical markings are not meant to be used forever. At some point, the learner must lose the training wheels but yes, it takes time and effort to get to that point.

Not only was I raised in a native speaking community, I am also a product of *kaiapuni* or Hawaiian language immersion education.

Perhaps the funds that are required to replace the work of kupuna who came before all of us could be reallocated (like the HB2074 bill?) to provide the much needed resources for our Hawaiian language immersion schools?

Mahalo a nui for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Keokapukoa Kaohelaulii

HB-2772-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 7:36:50 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keao NeSmith	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Niihau community consists of entire families who have not lost the Hawaiian language at any time in Hawaii's history until today. The Hawaiian of this community is not the Hawaiian of new speakers who learn the language through textbooks, classrooms, and from teachers who are English speakers who speak Hawaiian, usually with an English accent, with very little or none of the competency or authenticity of native speakers, primarily the Niihau community.

Therefore, I am opposed to this bill because it does not take into account our native speakers and their position as authorities of the language. There needs to be acknowledgement in the bill that our Niihau speakers must be acknowledged and their consultation sought. Ka Leo o na Kupa is a hui of native speakers of Hawaiian of the Niihau community. Their consultation must be sought with regards to this bill and coercion of the Niihau community by academics should not be tolerated as this is highly offensive from a cultural lense and does not reflect genuine Hawaiian usage or values.

Thank you,

Keao NeSmith

Kekaha, Kauai

HB-2772-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:48:34 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hedy L Sullivan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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HB-2772-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 10:06:41 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kia matias	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"The Niihau community consists of entire families who have not lost the Hawaiian language at any time in Hawaii's history until today. The Hawaiian of this community is not the Hawaiian of new speakers who learn the language through textbooks, classrooms, and from teachers who are English speakers who speak Hawaiian, usually with an English accent, with very little or none of the competency or authenticity of native speakers, primarily the Niihau community.

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