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MĀNOA

Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge  
Office of the Dean

February 4, 2025

Rep Andrew Garrett, Chair, Terez Amato, Vice Chair and members of the House Committee for Higher Education

Testimony in Support of HB 1352

Submitted by Jonathan K Osorio, Dean, Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge

Aloha and thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

I Hoa Nā Mo'olelo is a project developed by University of Hawai'i Associate Professor Kahikina de Silva 2021 to create a quarterly children's magazine for Kula Kaiapuni Hawaiian language immersion and charter school students, grades 2-6 on O'ahu. Since its inception in 1987, the Kaiapuni program has grown from a single school on O'ahu to 23 Immersion Schools and 6 Hawaiian medium Charter Schools spread across our pae'āina.

However, The growth of participation in Kaiapuni education has not been matched by growth of support for immersion schools, teachers, and families. Kula Kaiapuni continue to face struggles such as teacher shortages, insufficient facilities, and limited support for curriculum development Kaiapuni students have limited access to grade-appropriate reading materials, especially for intermediate level readers and their families have limited access to activities, materials, and learning opportunities that they can do together to promote use of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i in the home.

These are the insufficiencies that I Hoa nā Mo'olelo was designed to address. Since 2021, Professor de Silva has led a small operation of graduate assistants and undergraduate student writers at UH Mānoa to design, produce and disseminate this literature in benefits Kaiapuni children and their families while supporting the State's commitment to 'ōlelo Hawai'i. I Hoa nā Mo'olelo is creating these quarterly magazines for five different age groups and an online news report, while training Hawaiian language students at the university to research, write, edit and produce this series.

The State of Hawai'i has a historic and legal obligation to sustain and strengthen 'ōlelo Hawai'i. I Hoa nā Mo'olelo provides an efficient and cost effective way to meet this obligation by channeling the dedication of this professor and the students who have come through her classes and her outreach efforts into meeting the needs of our Hawaiian language communities. We ask that you vote to pass HB 1352.

**February 3, 2025**

**TO:** Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education

**FROM:** Riann Nālani Fujihara, Individual Citizen

**SUBJECT: HEARING OF FEBRUARY 05, 2025; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1352, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1352, appropriating funds to the University of Hawai‘i’s Hawaiian Language programs. These programs contribute invaluable resources and cultural knowledge to ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i revitalization efforts throughout Hawai‘i.

I had the honor and privilege of being a mea kākau (writer) for Ke Pānānā Aloha during my time as a student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. As an ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i graduate, no words can describe how much I appreciated being able to not only strengthen my knowledge of Hawaiian language, but to also be paid for my efforts to contribute to a cause that I am passionate about.

I humbly offer my support of this house bill for the following reasons:

1. My colleagues and I dedicated hours of our time researching mo‘olelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian stories/history), creating visual art, and collaborating to rewrite the stories in a way that engages ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speakers within our communities.
2. Although the work we did was for the love of our people and culture, the funds we were given solidified that the work we did was valued by the university—who claims to “[deliver] a multicultural global experience in a Hawaiian place of learning, with a long history of adherence to the principles of sustainability and the essence of aloha.”
3. As residents of Hawai‘i, it is our collective responsibility to prioritize the perpetuation of the language and the well-being of the host culture—especially considering the history that proves that bans on Hawaiian language usage was a tool that contributed to further loss of cultural connection for the Hawaiian people.
4. The work of programs such as Ke Pānānā Aloha continues to be in demand. Creating Hawaiian language resources that evolve with the times will assist future generations in knowing the stories of Hawai‘i and prove that Hawaiians have been fighting for years to hold fast to the practices of our kūpuna (ancestors).

For the foregoing reasons, I support HB1352. Mahalo for your time and consideration of my testimony.

**HB-1352**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:40:04 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Makana Gomes	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1352, appropriating funds to the University of Hawai‘i’s Hawaiian Language programs. These programs contribute invaluable resources and cultural knowledge to ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i revitalization efforts throughout Hawai‘i and provide valuable material for Hawaiian language immersion programs which are heavily in lack thereof.**

**I currently have the honor and privilege of being a member of Ke Pānānā Aloha where I help to peer edit journals for the Hawaiian language newspaper Ka Ulu Hoi at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. As an ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i masters student, I am bearing witness to lack of funding in the department as well as the decline of enrollment due to lack of support for Native Hawaiian engagement. These programs are building up the future educators of Hawaiian language and without funding many students including myself will suffer. I am forever grateful for this program as it has drastically changed my view on the Hawaiian language and provided me with a means of supporting myself in a field that I am passionate about.**

**I humbly offer my support of this house bill for the following reasons:**

- 1. My colleagues and I dedicated hours of our time researching mo‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian stories/history), creating visual art, and collaborating to rewrite the stories in a way that engages ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speakers within our communities to enrich the younger generation of Hawaiian language speakers by providing them with relevant curriculum that pertains to place based learning grounded in identity.**
- 2. Although the work we did was for the love of our people and culture, the funds we were given solidified that the work we did was valued by the university—who claims to “[deliver] a multicultural global experience in a Hawaiian place of learning, with a long history of adherence to the principles of sustainability and the essence of aloha.” Also, providing us a means of income that always allows us to sustain ourselves as we all struggle to make ends meet as young Hawaiians who are enrolled in higher education.**
- 3. As residents of Hawai‘i, it is our collective responsibility to prioritize the perpetuation of the language and the well-being of the host culture— especially considering the history that proves that bans on Hawaiian language usage was a tool that contributed to further loss of cultural connection for the Hawaiian people. It would be a travesty if this program was**

**lost, not only for us working for Ke Pānānā Aloha, but for the keiki that would not get these mo‘olelo who deserve a proper chance to be educated with the stories of their ancestors, ultimately grounding themselves in who they are as Kanaka Maoli.**

**4. The work of programs such as Ke Pānānā Aloha continues to be in demand. Creating Hawaiian language resources that evolve with the times will assist future generations in knowing the stories of Hawai‘i and prove that Hawaiians have been fighting for years to hold fast to the practices of our kūpuna (ancestors). We continue to hold fast in the pursuit of excellence in Native Hawaiian scholarship to provide the younger generation with curriculum.**

**For the foregoing reasons, I support HB1352. Mahalo for your time and consideration of my testimony.**

**HB-1352**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:20:58 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaikaina Kekua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**My name is Kaikaina Kekua and I strongly support HB 1352, I Hoa Nā Mo‘olelo. In addition to the many other program goals, this program will create a much-needed Highlights-inspired children's magazine in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i for our keiki.**

**As a kumu kaiapuni, I see the critical need for engaging ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i resources. I Hoa Nā Mo‘olelo will fill this gap. The team has already begun gathering mo‘olelo from across the pae‘āina and visiting schools to share these stories and gauge student interest, ensuring the magazine resonates with its target audience. My students continue to talk about the visit from their team a few years ago.**

**This Highlights-style format is brilliant for engaging young learners. Imagine keiki eagerly reading mo‘olelo from their districts, learning about native plants and animals, and enjoying fun activities—all in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i! Connecting keiki with their local histories through district-specific mo‘olelo is crucial for language acquisition and cultural preservation.**

**Here are some of the reflections and feedback from my students who have been fortunate to benefit from the program. (Translated from ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i to English.)**

- “My younger brother is in Papa ‘Ekahi(first grade) at our kula kaiapuni, he wants to learn English. The reason for this is that there are no interesting and fun stories in Hawaiian language at his age. When his teachers teach him in Hawaiian, it is crucial to make it interesting. With these books, our stories become even more interesting and engaging for our younger siblings.”**
- “I think games and activities in a Hawaiian language magazine are very valuable because when I was younger, it was really hard to learn only through books. If I had games and activities like this, I think my language would be even stronger today.”**
- “I feel like these books are a great opportunity to inspire younger kids, and also teach them mo‘olelo in a fun and easy way. I have a younger sister in the third grade and she loves to read books, I’ve been able to see her English improve through her interest in books and I can only imagine how much her Hawaiian would improve if she had access to engaging and interesting magazines in Hawaiian.”**
- “When I was in Papa 2, there weren’t a lot of books written in Hawaiian. The books that we did have were not interesting. They were books about ‘ōlelo no‘eau and**

stories about ali'i which were not interesting to me at the time. I think if I had these magazines, I would have been more interested in reading 'Ōlelo Hawai'i."

- "I really enjoyed the visit from the kumu at Ke Pānānā. They presented the mo'olelo in a fun and engaging way that included acting and mele. I can only imagine what they will come up with as the final product of the magazine, I can't wait to read it."

**I Hoa Nā Mo'olelo has the potential to be a game-changer for Hawaiian language revitalization. The team's initial work demonstrates their commitment. I urge you to support HB 1352 and invest in this vital program. Mahalo nui loa.**

**LATE**

**February 4, 2025**

**TO:** Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education

**FROM:** Kahikina de Silva, Individual Citizen

**SUBJECT: HEARING OF FEBRUARY 05, 2025; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1352, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I**

Mahalo for providing this hearing as an opportunity for us to testify in support of HB 1352, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai‘i’s Hawaiian language programs, specifically that which is entitled I Hoa nā Mo‘olelo. I offer my testimony as a second-language learner of Hawaiian, who has gained a level of fluency through exposure to mele (poetry) and mo‘olelo (prose narratives). I am also testifying as the founder and director of the projects that fall under I Hoa nā Mo‘olelo.

Much ground has been gained in the past 40+ years of the movement to revitalize the Hawaiian language and re-normalize it into our schools, communities, families, and public domains. Following the passage of Act 57, Section 30 in 1896, when Hawaiian language was removed from our schools and replaced with English as the “medium and basis of instruction,” the population of Hawaiian language speakers shrunk drastically. Native Hawaiians were made to feel ashamed of their identity as Hawaiians and to devalue the history, heritage, and common markers of our people, including Hawaiian language itself. By the turn of the century, Hawaiian language newspapers were already expressing concern that Hawaiians would abandon our native language, and, with it, the histories, values, and unique world view of our people.

This, however, was not the case.

In 1976, Hōkūle‘a completed its first sail to Tahiti and back, proving that the movement of Pacific Peoples through the ocean was deliberate, and spurring a “Hawaiian Renaissance” that very quickly began a movement for the restoration of Hawaiian language to our lāhui. In 1978, Hawaiian was re-instated as an official language of Hawai‘i, which laid the groundwork for the establishment of Pūnana Leo immersion preschools in 1984, the repealment of Act 57, Section 30 in 1986, and the first Kula Kaiapuni (immersion school) in 1987. These Kaiapuni schools enabled students, for the first time since 1896, to continue their education through the medium of Hawaiian language from preschool through college. And what began as a single Kaiapuni school in 1987 has grown to 23 immersion schools and 6 Hawaiian medium charter schools spread across our archipelago.

Kula Kaiapuni have been a significant contributor to the increased well-being of our language and its speakers, but most of the support these schools receive has been hard-won through struggles with—rather than working alongside—the state government. And they are still not on equal footing with their English language counterparts when it comes to resources, staffing, facilities, funding, teacher training, and the list goes on. Although this bill cannot address all of the struggles Kaiapuni schools and teachers face, it will have a marked effect on Hawaiian language resources available for Kaiapuni students and their families.

I Hoa nā Mo‘olelo’s main project for the past three years has been the creation of a new literacy-based magazine geared specifically toward Kaiapuni students and their families here on O‘ahu. Each grade will have four dedicated issues; each issue includes a traditional story for each of the six districts on O‘ahu, a science corner, a kilo (observation) column, language games and puzzles, interviews with inspiring Hawaiian speakers, and activities that Hawaiian speaking students can do, in Hawaiian, with their families—whether or not those families are active speakers of Hawaiian. By putting these resources into a magazine, we create a space outside of school for Hawaiian language to thrive, and for our keiki, makua, and kūpuna to thrive as well.

An important aspect of this project is that the content creators—writers, illustrators, puzzle-makers, etc.—are all students of the Hawaiian language program at UH Mānoa. These students, often undergraduates nearing graduation, are trained not only in the grammar of Hawaiian, but also in the stories and geographies of our home and the uniquely Hawaiian ways of expressing ourselves and recording our experiences. This feature of our program often slows down the process, as we continually have to train new students to replace those who graduate and thereby leave our project. However, this also means that more UH students are able to participate in the program, receive training, and use it to further their successes. After graduation, our student creators have gone on to be teachers and graduate students, to run their own Hawaiian media businesses, and even to become Hawaiian language specialists in organizations such as the Maui City Council.

Though these student creators conduct their work because of their passion for ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i and the care and concern they have for the new and upcoming generations, this is real work. It involves hours of research, collaboration, translation, composition, drafting and redrafting, and testing the completed pieces in the field. Providing salaried positions not only honors the work these students do; it also ensures they can commit the necessary amount of time to it, without having to find multiple other jobs to support a Hawaiian language “hobby”.

All of Hawai‘i is stronger when Native Hawaiian programs, language, and organizations thrive. When knowledge of our language and culture become real assets that propel us forward in measureable ways. When our keiki can see themselves and their heritage reflected back to them as something of value. When Kaiapuni students are provided with the same kind of support that is expected for their English language counterparts. This program will make a significant step forward in achieving this goal. For these reasons, I support HB 1352. Mahalo for your consideration of my testimony.