



TO: Teresa Leger Fernandez, Chair
House of Representatives Subcommittee on the
Indigenous Peoples of the United States

FR: Edith K. Kawai, President
Waimea Hawaiian Civic Club

DT: October 3, 2021

RE: Testimony In Support of House Joint Resolution 55

Welina aloha kākou Honorable Chair and Committee Members:

My name is Edith Kawai, Pelekikena (President) of the Waimea Hawaiian Civic Club (“Club”). Established in 1949 and chartered by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs in 1959, our Club sits in the middle of Paniolo Country on Parker Ranch on Hawai‘i Island and its early members were Hawaiian people whose ancestors were kama‘āina, or native, to Waimea. In 1951, some thirty years after Congress enacted the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920 (HHCA) which established a land trust to rehabilitate the Hawaiian people to the ‘āina ho‘opulapula, my grandfather, Harry Hi‘ileiali‘i Kawai, and other Paniolo living and working in Waimea, received the first area awards of pastoral and residential lands. Those awards guaranteed that Hawaiian people and their ‘ohana would have a solid home base from which to live, grow, and thrive in their birth communities. Today, Waimea and the surrounding area have grown to include two residential settlements (Puukapu and Lalamilo) within the community, a large ranching and agricultural area with home sites in the outlying Pu‘ukapu-Nienie areas.

The Hawaiian Civic Club movement has much to be grateful for in Prince Jonah Kalaniana‘ole Kūhiō, Ke Ali‘i Maka‘āinana (Prince of the People). The Congressional record abounds with his own words, desires, and challenges to secure assistance for the Hawaiian people who had suffered displacement, ravages of introduced diseases, poverty, and cultural upheaval. Prince Kūhiō’s desire was for all persons with Hawaiian blood to receive the benefit of the Act. One hundred years after the enactment of the HHCA, the blood quantum among the Hawaiian people has thinned with the result that fewer Hawaiians qualify for outright awards and, Hawaiian families who have lived for now for five generations in some cases, no longer have ohana with sufficient blood quantum to qualify for successorship thus jeopardizing current and future generations the ability to continue practicing the sustaining, agriculturally-based activities such as ranching and farming which have been the foundation of rural settlements such as Waimea.

It is impossible for Hawaiians, most who work in the service industries, to afford to buy land and build houses where purchase prices start at \$700,000. Rental houses are simply not available and when they are, rental rates are far beyond what Hawaiians earning minimum wage and some working more than one job can afford.

It is time to harken back to Prince Kūhiō's proposed 1/32 requirement and his intent and reason therefore. I, therefore, respectfully submit the testimony on behalf of the Waimea Hawaiian Civic Club to you in strong support of HJR55, which reflects federal government concurrence of the good works of our Hawai'i State government, both the legislature and our Governor in amending the HHCA through Act 80 to ensure that our children are afforded to opportunity to flourish on `āina ho`opulapula (homesteading lands).

Our aloha and mahalo a nui to all of the sponsors of HJR55 from sister states across the country.