HCR 89/HR 73 – REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO AMEND THE
NATIVE HAWAIIAN HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT TO ENSURE THAT THE
ACT RECEIVES PERMANENT FUNDING

Chair Ing, Vice Chair DeCoite, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support for House Concurrent
Resolution 89 (HCR 89) and House Resolution 73 (HR 73). HCR 89 and HR 73 request
that the United States Congress amend the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement
Act to ensure that the Act receives permanent funding. Enacted in 1988, the Native
Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act was created for the purposes of establishing a
program for the provision of comprehensive health promotion and disease prevention
services to maintain and improve the health status of the Hawaiian people, raising the
health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, and to provide existing
Native Hawaiian health care programs with all resources necessary to effectuate the
Act. Funding for the Act was established until fiscal year 2019, but it is uncertain as to
whether long-term funding will be approved beyond fiscal year 2019.

The Department of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine
(JABSOM) found that Hawaii’s Native Hawaiian population had a lower life expectancy
than other ethnic groups in the state, and had higher rates of death from heart disease,
cancer, stroke, diabetes and injuries compared to our overall population. Half of the
Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders report meeting criteria for obesity. In light of
these significant disparities in the health and wellbeing of Hawaii’s Native Hawaiian
population, permanent funding of the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act is
critical. The Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act should receive the same
federal benefit as the Indian Health Care Improvement Act which is guaranteed
permanent funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.