SCR 73 SD1 – REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO AMEND THE
NATIVE HAWAIIAN HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT TO ENSURE THAT THE
ACT RECEIVES PERMANENT AUTHORITY

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support for Senate Concurrent
Resolution 73 SD1. SCR 73 requests that the United States Congress amend the
Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act to ensure that the Act’s authority is
permanent with all the necessary funding to fulfill the purposes of the Act. 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 these measures.