



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
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by

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and

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SCR 180/SR 146 – SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE PLAN, INCLUDING GOALS, BENCHMARKS, STRATEGIES, AND OUTCOMES, TO BUILD UPON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND TO ACCELERATE THE NORMALIZATION OF 'OLELO HAWAI'I.

E ke Kenekoa Shimabukuro a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike Kuleana Hawai'i. Aloha 'oukou; Chair Shimabukuro, Vice Chair Kahele, and members of the committee:

'O wau nō 'o Keiki Kawai'ae'a, ka Luna Ho'okele o Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani ma ke Kulanui O Hawai'i Ma Hilo. I am Keiki Kawai'ae'a, the Director of the College of Hawaiian Language at UH Hilo. On this the International Year of the Indigenous Language, I am pleased to provide testimony in strong support for SCR 180/SR 146.

The state of Hawai'i has a long standing record in support of the revitalization of 'ōlelo Hawai'i. It is the first state to declare its only Indigenous language – ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i – as one of its state's official language through constitutional mandate. It has supported Hawaiian language through education including the Kula Kaiapuni Hawai'i/Hawaiian Language Immersion schools across P-12 public and charter schools across the state. It also created the only Indigenous Language College, Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani in the nation at UH Hilo. Each February, it celebrates mahina 'ōlelo Hawai'i/Hawaiian language month in recognition of its state's language treasure. Hawai'i has demonstrated national leadership through its many efforts to revitalize and renormalize Hawaiian as a model for other endangered languages around the world.

As the state experiences the last of its 20-30 mānaleo, Native Hawaiian speaking kūpuna and the rise of new speakers some 15,000 students strong across P-20 education, 27,000 self-identified speakers in Hawai'i and across the U.S. continent, and an increase of Hawaiian spoken as the home language, Hawai'i is ready to take the next step towards the development of a Hawaiian language plan. This resolution aims to

address a growing commitment of the State of Hawai'i towards further advancement of 'ōlelo Hawai'i through government commitment as a viable and vital language for its future generations.

Ka Haka 'Ula has worked for many years with the 'Aha Pūnana Leo as have the other entities listed in the SCR180 and UH Hilo supports its leadership in developing this report. Because of its private non-profit status and years of work in the revitalization of 'ōlelo Hawai'i, the 'Aha Pūnana Leo can move quickly and efficiently in organizing the meetings and producing the report than government entities. I strongly support the commitment to strengthen the vitality of Hawaiian through a collective Hawaiian language plan and ask for your support towards this goal.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testimony on this measure.