



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

April 1, 2009 at 9:30 am

By
Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor

And
Prof. Maenette Kape'ahiokalani Padeken Ah Nee-Benham
Dean, Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HCR 126/HR 104 – REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS TO WORK WITH THE HAWAII'INUIĀKEA SCHOOL OF HAWAIIAN KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII' I TO DEVELOP A KUPUNA HONORARY DEGREE PROGRAM.

Chair Carroll, Vice Chair Shimabukuro and members of the Committee:

My name is Maenette Kape'ahiokalani Padeken Ah Nee-Benham, and I serve as Dean of Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am presenting testimony on behalf of Virginia Hinshaw, Chancellor of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM).

Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, as we have testified in the past, is supportive of a program that recognizes our Kūpuna and cultural practitioners for their invaluable cultural contributions, thereby, acknowledging the value and living-life of 'ike Hawai'i.

While we are supportive of this effort, we want to make clear the following:

1. We are willing to work, in a consulting capacity, with the Education Hale of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and with a Kūpuna advisory board to further define this "Nobel prize." Please note: Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, as a unit of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, must adhere to an internal process that determines honorary degree processes and recipients, we cannot, in partnership with OHA, award an honorary degree.
2. We are supportive of, and are willing to work in a consulting capacity - to define an appropriate naming of the "prize" in consultation with the Education Hale of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and an appropriate Kūpuna advisory board as well as defining appropriate standards for the award.
3. We are also supportive of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, as the appropriate agency that awards the prize. And, are greatly honored by the House to be included in this most important effort.

Again, honoring our Kūpuna and cultural practitioners affirms who we are as Kanaka Maoli.