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**RECONCILIATION PROCESS FORMAL HEARINGS
EAST WEST CENTER
DECEMBER 11, 1999**

**TESTIMONY TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND THE U.S. JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT**

Aloha:

MR. John Berry, Assistant Interior Secretary of the Department of Interior

MR. Mark Van Norman, Director of the Office of Tribal Justice

My name is Ku'umeaaloha Gomes. I trace my ancestry to Keawe of Hawai'i Island, and I am from the Kanuha 'ohana in Kailua, Kona.

The road to reconciliation is paved not only with grieving, forgiveness, and remembering. Reconciliation is more importantly about social justice, and social justice in the form of the redistribution and control of our resources.

Your efforts to set up a Hawaiian Desk in the Department of Interior, are commendable. However that is not enough. The sovereignty of our Hawai'i nation is based on our ability as a nation of people to control our own destiny, our sovereignty, our right to self determination.

Your efforts, speak to how you will continue to tether each and everyone of us Kanaka Maoli. How you, as the colonizing authority will continue to determine how far we move based on how long the rope is that you place around our necks. So, with this rope, we can roam in the pastures you set aside for us to roam in, yet we are still tied to you by this rope.

This is not freedom! We are not free! We are far from independent to be and do as we please, here in our own Hawai'i Nation or internationally!

Public Law 103-150 acknowledges that

"the indigenous Hawaiian people never directly relinquished their claims to their inherent sovereignty as a people or over their national lands to the United States, either through their monarchy or through a plebiscite or referendum".

If as a colonizing authority, you truly believe what is written in the Apology Bill, and if this process of reconciliation before us now, is a process that you as a colonizing authority take seriously, then why are you representatives of the Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice sitting here?

If this were a true process of reconciliation, a process in which you work to restore justice to a people who have been victimized through your own efforts of colonization, a process in which the only way is to restore all of resources back to us, then should not representatives from your

own U.S. State Department would be here, to do that work?

If it were your own U.S. State Department that was sitting in those chairs, you as colonizing authorities would be making a serious admission for the wrongs that you have done, publicly, and helping those who have colonized, suppressed, and oppressed since you stole our country from us, become the valuable Nation of Hawai'i citizens that we deserve to be.

If this was a true process for reconciliation, you would be continue to hold yourselves accountable for the wrongs you have done, and would take responsibility for contributing to the restoration of our independent Nation of Hawai'i.

If this were a true process of reconciliation, we, Kanaka Maoli, would be sitting listening to you tell us when and how independence for the Nation of Hawai'i would be restored! So, perhaps what we really need here is a Truth and Reconciliation process! You speak the truth to your offenses, then we, as the victims reconcile our differences with you!

In closing, I add my voice to the many who say, we do not want to stand under your umbrella, and get our backsides wet because you take up so much room; we want our own umbrella so we can stay dry! We don't want to continue to be tethered by your U.S. government; we do not want you to lengthen the rope, we want you to remove it, and now is the time! We want our Hawai'i nation restored, we want our INDEPENDENT NATION OF HAWAI'I restored!

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