

1. Name: Kū Kahakalau

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2. Will you be representing a Native Hawaiian organization?

yes

a. Please provide the name and mission of your organization:

Kanu o ka 'Āina Learning 'Ohana (KALO). The mission of KALO is to establish and evaluate an academically rigorous, culturally driven K-12 Hawaiian Charter School in North Hawai'i by August 2000, where up to 300 students and their families will be actively involved in perpetuating Hawai'i's indigenous language, culture and traditions while also reaching their individually highest potential. Additionally, KALO has made a commitment to assist in the implementation and evaluation of other family-oriented, quality K-12 models of education, designed and controlled by Hawaiian communities from Hawai'i Island to Ni'ihau, that prepare Hawai'i's indigenous youth to assume future political, economic and cultural leadership positions in 21st century Hawai'i and assure the future survival of Hawai'i's natural environments, it's native people, our culture and our way of life

b. How large is your organization's membership?

100+ past and present students, 150+ adult members

c. Please provide your organization's address:

P.O. Box

Kamuela, Hawai'i 96743

3. Which topics would you like to address: December 10, 1999

Native Hawaiian Health and Education

Native Hawaiian Culture and Economic Development

Hawaiian Land and Natural Resources

## RECONCILIATION TESTIMONY

My name is Kū Kahakalau and I reside with my husband Nālei and my two daughters 'I'inimaikalani and Pōlanimakamae (ages 4 & 6) in Kukuihaele on Hawai'i Island, overlooking majestic Waipi'o Valley. While the primary focus of my testimony concerns Native Hawaiian Education, this topic cannot be presented without touching upon Native Hawaiian Culture and Economic Development, as well as issues involving Hawai'i's Land and Natural Resources.

As a Hawaiian practitioner, educator and activist, I have spent the past 20 years perpetuating Hawai'i's native language, culture and traditions on a daily basis, raising my daughters to be fluent in both Hawaiian and English, practicing Hawaiian culture and traditions as a family, teaching Hawaiian language, history and culture as a certified high school teacher for the Department of Education. I have lectured at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and been involved in a wide variety of Hawaiian community education programs, land, cultural and environmental struggles and native community empowerment efforts throughout the islands.

Since 1992, I have been spearheading an ongoing education action research project on Hawai'i Island, developing a Hawaiian pedagogy of education, that is founded on traditional teaching and learning techniques while at the same time incorporating the latest in 21st century educational paradigms. For the past three years, I have been enrolled in a PhD program in Indigenous Education at Union Institute, which has allowed me to design, implement and evaluate a highly successful 9 -12 Hawaiian Academy, called Kanu o ka 'Āina. This student-centered, standards-based, interdisciplinary school-within-a-school at Honoka'a High and Intermediate is presently serving 70 students, 88 percent of whom are of Hawaiian ancestry.

To gain greater flexibility and more fiscal and curricular control over our educational process, as well as allow for the expansion of our model to include students from kindergarten on, I am presently completing a detailed implementation plan for a K-12 culturally driven, family oriented, community

based charter school of about 300 students, scheduled to commence in Fall of 2000. At the same time I have become actively involved in assisting Hawaiian communities throughout the archipelago to design and control their own educational programs via the charter school effort.

As the chair of KALO (the Kanu o ka 'Āina Learning 'Ohana), composed of over 300 official members and hundreds of other supporters, I wish to testify that Hawaiian communities throughout the archipelago are ready, willing and able to create and implement our own models of education. Specifically, KALO's mission is to establish and evaluate an academically rigorous, culturally driven K-12 Hawaiian Charter School in North Hawai'i by August 2000, where up to 300 students and their families will be actively involved in perpetuating Hawai'i's indigenous language, culture and traditions while also reaching their individually highest potential. KALO has also made a commitment to assist in the implementation and evaluation of other family-oriented, quality K-12 models of education, designed and controlled by Hawaiian communities from Hawai'i Island to Ni'ihau, that prepare Hawai'i's indigenous youth to assume future political, economic and cultural leadership positions in 21st century Hawai'i and assure the future survival of Hawai'i's natural environment, it's native people, our language and culture and our way of life.

In recent decades, many millions of federal dollars have been spent, under the guise of trying to bring about educational success for Native Hawaiians. Yet, little or no data exists documenting a system wide impact of this federal assistance, and while small pockets of Hawaiian individuals and a few organizations have certainly benefited from this generous support, the vast majority of the 48,000 children of Hawaiian ancestry within the Department of Education, the most undereducated group in the State and in some cases in the Nation have remained unimpacted by the existing federal educational assistance policies, controlled by special interest groups. Instead of promoting a practical approach to designing Hawaiian educational programs that teach native students

how to walk successfully in two worlds, millions of federal dollars are expended year after year, on haphazard, compartmentalized curriculum development that lacks a bigger vision and has little or no direct impact on the majority of Hawai'i's public school students, who make up 25 percent of the DOE and are the largest and fastest growing ethnic student population in Hawai'i.

In an era when models of education designed and controlled at the community level are widely recognized as more effective than top-down developed and managed educational systems - not just within indigenous communities, but nationwide - it is essential that Hawai'i's native communities, particularly rural areas with high concentrations of Hawaiians, are given the opportunity to implement, via an action research process, innovative models of Hawaiian education, such as the one we have developed on Hawai'i Island, that are tailored to the unique resources available in each community. Such a change in federal educational policy would assure much more immediate and direct empowerment of Hawaiian students and have much greater impact, since community designed and controlled education would necessary also involve the student's extended family as well as the community.

I believe as Native Hawaiians we have the right to create our own prenatal to adult models of education, including our own teacher training and university programs, assiduously different in form and content from presently existing models, yet at least equal in scope and breadth. I also believe that the federal government, has an obligation to financially assist us in the creation of such Hawaiian educational programs that involve the community at all levels, teach students how to create sustainable futures - particularly in the rural areas of the islands - and assure the perpetuation of Hawai'i's native culture, language and traditions into the new millennium. While on an interim basis, these programs, established with federal funds, would be financed by the State, similar to Charter Schools, the eventual goal of these Hawaiian educational learning centers would be to become as much self-sustaining as possible, and upon attainment of political and economic sovereignty become part of a system of Hawaiian education that

promotes control at the community level.

To allow such Hawaiian educational programs to become self-sustaining, land and other natural resources vital to perpetuating Native Hawaiian traditions and culture must be available for rural communities. In addition, assistance with the start-up of a wide variety of economic ventures involving the students and the community is necessary, if rural Hawaiian communities are to remain just that. Our model is called Kanu o ka 'Āina - which means "natives of the land from generations back", because it is designed for those who are and would like to remain culturally connected Hawaiians. We know that by taking care of our land and our natural resources, by working together as families and communities we can survive as a people into the next century, not static in time, but yet, in control of our destiny.

For over a century, we have been forced into educational, political and economic systems designed and controlled by foreign philosophies and practices, while our culture, our land and our natural resources have been exploited. What we are asking for now is a return of all lands in Hawai'i presently controlled by the federal government and the funding of a comprehensive, seamless education, health and economic development package designed by Hawaiians, that will directly impact Hawaiian communities, families and individuals on a grass root level. This package must include the establishment of quality, prenatal to adult educational programs, comprehensive systems of health care that include traditional practices and the creation of community and family based entrepreneurial projects and business ventures that are guided by Hawaiian values and traditions.