



To: Edward K Thompson/OFA/CS/DCI@DDI
cc:

Subject: Testimony from Irish Barber-Kanaka'ole

Aloha, Staff Assistant Ed Thompson:

My name is Irish Ho'omaika'i-muonalani Barber-Kanaka'ole. I am the wife of Eric Kawehskalaninuihemoleleonaali'iepauihauolimauloa Kanaka'ole, the daughter of Bert (Kaihe) and Paige (Kawelo) Barber of Kailua, born and raised in the ahupua'a of Ko'olaupoko. I am also a graduate of the Kamehameha Schools, class of 1982. I served in the US Army Reserve from 1984 to 1991 and voluntarily left the Army Reserve at the rank of Captain.

I want to thank you all for your tremendous support of the Hawaiian people. We are in desperate need of your help. I am witness to the loss of our language due to our shame of being different from Americans. My great-grandmother, Helen Kaina, a fluent speaker, and my niece, Ku'uipo Griffin, a schooled speaker, could converse with each other in Hawaiian, but my grandmother, my mother and I could not understand the conversation.

Americans love to change the rules in their favor. They did so with the Great Mabelo where they taught us how to put up fences and told us that if we owned the land we could do what we wanted with it.

Then, in the 1980's, I witnessed how the affluent, white population who lived in the Kahala and Hawaii Kai areas argued to the courts about how they could not uphold their agreement with the Bishop Estate and individual families. They needed to break their decades-old leasehold agreements because they did not want to pay the current market price for the property! The Supreme Court forced individual landowners to sell their valuable land to private owners for no apparent public gain.

I saw it again in the 1990's when townhome leasehold agreements were broken on the premise that the lessors held a monopoly of the land and that the system was antiquated. These are just two of at least four land issues that I have witnessed in my lifetime.

We need to take care of business. We need to do something to raise the esteem of our Hawaiian community. Our people are lost in a culture that is so different than the way we are raised. I am ashamed every time there's a crime announced on television and the criminal has Hawaiian name.

I EMPLORE THAT YOU PLEASE SUPPORT THE AKAKA BILL S. 2899 AND H.R. 4904 BY VOTING IN FAVOR OF THESE MEASURES.

Congress has passed over 100 bills relating to Native Hawaiians. Most of these acts of congress acknowledge that Hawaiians are Native Americans, but unlike Indians and

Alaskan Natives, Hawaiians have been excluded from the U.S. Policy on Native American self-determination. It is time to address this exclusion and to begin reconciliation.

If this bill does not pass, there will only be more anger and more resentment building in our already dysfunctional society. Hawaiians need a place to conduct their business affairs; need to feel proud again. We are an endangered race, and need your assistance now before it is too late to keep the uniqueness of our culture.

Mahalo for your time and assistance with this very important bill.