



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEDIA RELEASE

OHA Board of Trustees Vote Unanimously to Support Recent Changes to Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act

HONOLULU, HAWAII'I (July 15, 2010) The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Board of Trustees voted unanimously today to support the changes to the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act (NHGRA), which were recently agreed to by Senator Daniel Akaka, Senator Daniel Inouye, Governor Linda Lingle and Attorney General Mark Bennett.

“This timely and unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees places OHA, the Constitutional entity representing Hawaiians, at the lead position in supporting these important changes, which will allow all of us to move forward with this landmark bill,” said Haunani Apoliona, Chairperson, Office of Hawaiian Affairs. “This bill is good for Hawaiians and will bring beneficial outcomes to all residents of Hawai'i. This is an opportunity for Native Hawaiians to unite and move forward together with a collective voice. I encourage ALL Hawaiians, wherever they may reside, to participate in the process for it will take all of us working together to make a difference for years to come,” Apoliona said.

The changes ensure that the Native Hawaiian Governing Entity will negotiate with the State of Hawai'i and the U.S. Government to determine powers and authorities among the three governing entities. Also, the Native Hawaiian Governing Entity will be subject to state laws – as well as health and safety regulations – until the negotiations have been completed.

NHGRA represents a major milestone that moves Native Hawaiians closer to reconciliation more than a century after Queen Lili'uokalani and the Hawaiian government were illegally overthrown. The bill recognizes the inherent sovereignty of Native Hawaiians and provides them with the opportunity to reorganize a governing entity that will negotiate for powers, authorities, land, and resources. Until now, Native Hawaiians are the only group of Native Americans in the 50 states that has not been provided a process for federal recognition; Alaska Natives and American Indians have had federal recognition for many years.

For more information, visit www.oha.org/nhgra

About OHA

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) is a unique, independent state agency established through the Hawai'i State Constitution and statutes to advocate for the betterment of conditions of all Native Hawaiians, with a Board of Trustees elected by the voters of Hawai'i. OHA is guided by a vision and mission to ensure the perpetuation of the culture, protect the entitlements of Native Hawaiians, and build a strong and healthy Hawaiian people and nation. For more information, visit www.oha.org.

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