

# NEWS RELEASE



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## EVENTS BRING AWARENESS TO U.S. SUPREME COURT CASE

HONOLULU – The Office of Hawaiian Affairs today announced the scheduling of events in Hawai‘i and across the continental U.S. to bring attention to the Feb. 25 oral arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. in the case of State of Hawaii v. Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

“This state appeal has the potential to undermine all Native Hawaiian programs and assets as well as undermine the legal basis for Native Hawaiian federal recognition,” OHA Chairperson Haunani Apoliona said during a news conference on the grounds of ‘Iolani Palace, an important symbol to the Native Hawaiian community. “A far-reaching decision by the U.S. Supreme Court could affect OHA’s ability to carry out its mission of bettering the conditions of Native Hawaiians.”

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear the State Administration’s appeal of a Jan. 31, 2008, ruling by the Hawai‘i Supreme Court which prohibits the state from selling or transferring ceded lands to third parties until the unrelinquished claims of the Native Hawaiian people are resolved.

“We stand behind the decision by the Hawai‘i Supreme Court,” Apoliona said. “Therefore, we once again request that the governor withdraw the appeal. This issue should be decided in Hawai‘i.”

That sentiment is being carried through to events being planned so far in Honolulu, Seattle, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, New Haven, Connecticut, and Washington D.C. on Feb. 25.

Several events are being planned in Hawai‘i including a vigil at the State Capitol from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. with participants from across the islands.

At 5 a.m., HST, the time when the justices will hear the oral arguments, prayers and pahu drums will sound. Then, the drums will beat every hour, on the hour, until the end of the vigil. Several churches across Hawai‘i will also be ringing their bells at 5 a.m. as a sign of solidarity.

Tonight, OHA is producing a one-hour live television show at 7 p.m. on KITV during which viewers will be able to call-in questions for panelists former Gov. John Waihe‘e, State Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, State Rep. Mele Carroll and Chair Apoliona.

“In times of challenge and problem-solving, our ancestors and ‘ohana practiced coming together to focus and pool spiritual energies to overcome obstacles toward achieving a successful result. That traditional practice is Kūkulu Kumuhana,” Apoliona said. “We ask you to gather your ‘ohana and friends to join our spiritual hearts together in Kūkulu Kumuhana to focus and direct our collective positive thoughts during the time the U.S. Supreme Court will hear the ceded lands case.”

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