RES25-035
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 26

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Jan 29, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 4

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Deborah King	dking0923@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Jan 23, 2025 @ 07:20 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Council Chair Waters and Councilmembers,

I strongly support ʻŌLELO HAWAIʻI as an official language of the State of Hawai'i. I believe it is important to honor your roots and heritage. I believe that all people who live in Hawai'i and other countries should know the language and culture of the state or country they live in. By reaffirming ʻŌLELO HAWAIʻI as an official language we honor our forefathers and ancestors who fought for our freedom and our right for education. The more we know about each other the easier it is to live in peace and appreciate our differences and similarities.

Mahalo,

Deborah W. King

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Andrea Dias-Machado	andrea@huliaualoha.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hui Mākua ʻo Kapolei	Support	Jan 28, 2025 @ 02:47 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Dre Kalili	dreanalee@aohcc.org	96807
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs	Support	Jan 28, 2025 @ 08:29 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jonathan Osorio	osorio@hawaii.edu	96786
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaiʻinuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge	Support	Jan 29, 2025 @ 07:17 AM

Aloha mai e Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Andrea Dias-Machado, Pelekikena of Hui Mkua o Kapolei who represents the parents and families of haumna who attend Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Kapolei. I am submitting this written testimony in strong support of Resolution 25-35, which seeks to affirm ‘lelo Hawai‘i, as an official language of Hawaii. This Resolution is not just a recognition of a language but a celebration of our commitment to the preservation of our Hawaiian identity.

As stated in Council’s resolution 25-35, ‘lelo Hawai‘i is the original language of Hawaii, spoken by our ancestors and integral to the fabric of Hawaiian culture. It carries the wisdom, traditions, and stories of generations, and it is our kuleana to ensure its perpetuation. Affirming ‘lelo Hawai‘i as an official language honors the resilience of our kpuna who fought to keep the language alive during times of oppression.

Shortly after the City Council meeting on December 11, 2024, wherein Ms. Kai Lorinc made disparaging comments that constituted nothing less than an assault on lelo Hawaii, I reached out to this Council to mahalo you for coming to the defense of Ōlelo Hawaii – and I want to echo those sentiments today.

I want to acknowledge Chair Waters and Councilmember Kiaāina for introducing this important resolution to remind Hawaii that our language is alive and well with over 20,000 speakers in Hawaii today and thousands more to follow.

As such, Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Kapolei is currently addressing the critical need for immersion education in the Ewa Moku, with hopes of growing to a full K-12 kula – an effort that would also serve students in the neighboring Waianae and Waialua Moku. In Fall 2021, a group of mkua (parents), mobilized our Waiau kaiapuni community and advocated for a secondary Hawaiian Immersion School in the Ewa Moku to address 36 years of lack of access to this level of education within our community. Hence, Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Kapolei opened its doors in SY 23-24 and currently has grades 7 and 8 with its first high school class next school year. As we strive to enhance and expand these educational resources for our keiki and pio in the Ewa Moku, we seek your support in establishing a K-12 kula kaiapuni in Kapolei over the next four years, fully aligning with Resolution 25-35 acknowledgments of:

> WHEREAS, following a profound decline in the use of ‘lelo Hawai’i that led to its near extinction by the 1 980s, a number of historic initiatives were launched to revive ‘lelo Hawai’i, including the establishment of the Aha Pnana Leo and its Statewide network of Pnana Leo preschools and the State Department of Education’s Hawaiian language immersion program that built upon the Hawaiian language programs of the University of Hawaii System;
>
> Whereas in 1997, the State Legislature passed Act 315, Session Laws of Hawaii

1997, establishing the Ka Haka ‘Ula 0 Ke’eliklani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai’i at Hilo, supporting its Hale Kuamoo Hawaiian Language Center that provides curriculum development and materials for immersion programs Statewide, and eventually establishing the Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education program, the nation’s first teacher education program taught in an indigenous language; and

Whereas in 2019, the Hawaii Supreme Court, in Clarabal v. Department of Education of the State of Hawai’i, eta!., 446 P.3d 986 (Haw. 2019), held that the State is constitutionally required to make all reasonable efforts to provide students access to Hawaiian language immersion education in public schools in order to revive ‘lelo Hawai’i …

Mahalo piha for your time and attention to this important matter. Your support in affirming ‘lelo Hawai‘i as an official language and advocating for Hawaiian immersion education is vital for preserving our culture and nurturing the identity of the next generation of Hawaiian speakers. Together, we can ensure that the language and culture of Hawai‘i thrive in perpetuity.

Me ke aloha,
Andrea Dias-Machado
Pelekikena, Hui Mkua o Kapolei

ASSOCIATION OF
HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS

January 29, 2025

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
To the Honolulu City Council

Resolution 25-35 - REAFFIRMING ʻŌLELO HAWAIʻI AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE STATE OF HAWAIʻI

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Council:

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs **supports** Resolution 25-35, a reaffirmation of ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi as an official language and recognition of our thriving language.

The members of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs persistently work in partnership with others across our community to preserve, revitalize, and promote normalization of ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi in our homeland. We aim to drive and inspire language proliferation to ensure a living language in Hawaiʻi and beyond. It is unfortunate that in 2025 a resolution of this kind is necessary, but we truly appreciate the efforts of the City Council and the City administration to elevate and honor the proper use of ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi.

Founded by Prince Kūhiō in 1918, the Hawaiian Civic Club movement is the oldest Native Hawaiian community-based advocacy movement. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a not-for-profit organization that is a confederation of 60 individual and autonomous Hawaiian Civic Clubs and 3,500 members located across Hawaiʻi and across the continental United States.

We appreciate your favorable consideration of this resolution.

UNIVERSITY of HAWAIʻI®
MĀNOA

January 28, 2025

TESTIMONY TO HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 25-35
REAFFIRMING ŌLELO HAWAII AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Aloha mai Kākou e Luna Waters a me nā kānaka elele hanohano o ka Aha Kūkā Kūlanahale o Honolulu. O Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwoole Osorio kou inoa. O wau ka Dean o Hawaiinuiākea Hālau Ike Kūpuna ma ke Kulanui o Hawaii Mānoa

Mahalo to the Honolulu City Council and the authors of this resolution, Chair Waters and Council Member Kiaaina, for your determination that the gains made by our people to reclaim our language and expand its use here and everywhere, will be honored and protected

The remarks made by realtor Kai Lorinc before this council this past December demanding full access to information and refusing to be excluded by speakers of our language is a singularly important reminder of what privileges come to a people who occupy and colonize another people's country. Ms Lorinc believed that she had the right to understand and make herself understood at all times in this public place. Ironically, for those of us who have learned, taught, written, sung, demonstrated and protested in ōlelo Hawaii, being heard and understood in our language, in our native land is all we have ever demanded.

150 years ago, a legislative hearing like this would have contained motions, debates, resolutions and occasionally very personal insults in English and Hawaiian without it ever slowing the orders of business (and chicanery) that comes with government. When the Queen yielded to the United States on January 17, 1893, the insurgents who inserted themselves into our government soon removed the Kingdom's school teachers who taught in our language and then made education mandatory for all in English as the Americans assumed control in the 20th century.

Their success in institutionally intimidating our children from speaking our native tongue had the effect of suppressing the use of ōlelo makuahine but it also suppressed our appetite for education. Hawaiian language in the home declined dramatically in the decade that my parents were born and even further for the children in my generation and for our full participation in higher education along with the economic and social rewards that education makes possible.

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The rebuilding of our capacity to restore ōlelo Hawaii over the past 40 years has been done almost entirely by civic leaders, cultural practitioners and educators who had at first, only the encouragement of the State's 1978 Constitution. Government assistance and public respect was earned over these decades through hard work and sacrifice, by organizing Pūnana Leo by advocating for Kula Kaiapuni, by the Kaū Task Foce that envisioned a vibrant Hawaiian Studies and Language School at the University of Hawaii in 1986.

Their work encouraged my children's generation to enter higher education in growing numbers over the past 25 years, thousands of our ōpio learning ōlelo Hawaii for the first time as college freshmen in the University of Hawaii system. In the process we have reconnected with our kūpuna through the words and stories they left for us in over a hundred different newspapers and 125,000 newspaper pages all in our language, all demonstrating our kupuna's lively curiosity about the world and equally, admiration for their ancient ancestors.

This language revival has produced incredible outcomes with the percentage of students who identify as Native Hawaiians at the University of Hawaii Mānoa rising from 8% in the years when I was an undergraduate to over 15% in 2024. For several years, the Hawaiian language has been among the most sought after languages at UH Mānoa with more than a thousand students enrolling each semester. This is something to be celebrated and not dismissed. This is a testament to the resiliency of a people who very nearly disappeared from the face of the earth and have clawed ourselves back into recognition. Consider how many have not and how the world may be poorer for it.

But in the end this is also about Hawaii, a place that can really only be appreciated by the gifts of the Kānaka Ōiwi, our people, our songs, our dances, our stories and the way that all of that knowledge focuses in on our love and care or these islands and for one another. For those who don't understand, Hawaiian is taught at every community college and four year institution in Hawaii and we cordially invite any of you to start that education as my daughter did at 6 years old, as I did at the age of 37 and my mother at 59.

Mahalo for this resolution, Council members, and mahalo for the clear and accurate story it tells of Hawaii. Na wai e ole ke akamai i ke ala i maa i ka hele ia e ou mau kūpuna?

Jonathan K. Osorio, PhD
Professor of Hawaiian Studies and Dean
Hawaiinuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge

University of Hawaii Mānoa