



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Human Services

Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair

Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Chair

Senator Kaiali‘i Kahele, Vice Chair

Monday, March 16, 2020, 2:45 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 016

by

Rodney A. Maile

Administrative Director of the Courts

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: SCR 70 / SR 37, Requesting the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women to Convene a Task Force to Conduct a Study on Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls and to Submit a Report on the Study to the Legislature.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the intent of SCR 70 / SR 37, which asks the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women to convene a task force to conduct a study on missing and murdered native Hawaiian women and girls, and is willing to participate on the task force described in the resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



SCR70/SR37

REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN TO
CONDUCT A STUDY ON MISSING AND MURDERED NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN
AND GIRLS AND TO SUBMIT A REPORT ON THE STUDY TO THE LEGISLATURE

Senate Committee on Human Services
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

March 16, 2020

2:45 p.m.

Room 016

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SCR70/SR37. Particularly given recent indications that Native Hawaiians may be disproportionately represented among sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and sex abuse victims – who in turn may be at a heightened risk of being murdered or going missing – **OHA supports the improved data collection, reporting, and analysis envisioned in this measure, as a critical first step to identifying and preventing what may be a serious problem affecting the Native Hawaiian community.**

Recent data indicate that Native Hawaiian women and girls may be disproportionately represented among victims of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.¹ Most recently, the Hawai'i Commission on the Status of Women, in partnership with Arizona State University and Child and Family Services, published the third part of a multi-part report examining sex trafficking in Hawai'i. Although the survey underlying this most recent publication could rely on only a limited sample of 363 willing participants, nearly 27% of participants surveyed were identified as having been sexually trafficked, with 64% of these trafficking victims identifying as Native Hawaiian.² Alarming, 23% of the trafficking victims were first trafficked before the age of 18.³

This recent report supplements data that further demonstrate the high risk for sexual victimization within the Native Hawaiian community. For example, the Sex Abuse Treatment Center has indicated that, between 2001 and 2010, Native Hawaiians represented the largest ethnic group among their intake of sex abuse victims.⁴ Further, a more recent OHA study also revealed that Native Hawaiian girls are vastly overrepresented among juvenile runaways,⁵ and data show that one third of runaway

¹ ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF SEX TRAFFICKING INTERVENTION & THE HAWAII STATE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, SEX TRAFFICKING IN HAWAII PART III: SEX TRAFFICKING EXPERIENCES ACROSS HAWAII 5 (2020).

² *Id.* at 4.

³ *Id.*

⁴ DAWNA NELSON, EVELYN YANAGIDA & CAROL PLUMMER SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS IN HONOLULU: A 2001-2010 STATISTICAL PROFILE 24 (2012).

⁵ OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, HAUMEA: TRANSFORMING THE HEALTH OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN AND EMPOWERING WĀHINE WELL-BEING 74 (2018).

youth will be approached for sexual services within 48 hours of being on the street.⁶ In addition to—and perhaps partially due to—“land dispossession, exposure to sexual violence, hypersexualization, incarceration, cultural dislocation, intergenerational trauma, mental and emotional distress, racism, poverty, and going inequities”⁷—Native Hawaiian youth may, therefore, be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.

The potential prevalence of sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse of Native Hawaiians heightens concerns that Native Hawaiians, and particularly Native Hawaiian women and girls, may be at a higher risk of being murdered or going missing. However, as described in OHA’s report *Haumea: Transforming the Health of Native Hawaiian Women and Empowering Wāhine Well-Being*, there is a need for much better data collection generally on violence perpetrated against Native Hawaiian women, especially young women and girls, including through data disaggregated by age, race, and gender. Such data may be critical to better understanding and addressing the social and systemic contexts of violence against Native Hawaiian women and girls, including their murder or disappearance.⁸

OHA accordingly appreciates and supports the improved data collection, reporting, and analysis envisioned by this measure, which constitute critical first steps to understanding and addressing the potentially heightened risk of Native Hawaiian women and girls going missing, being murdered, or being otherwise subjected to violence or abuse.

To best represent the needs of OHA’s beneficiaries, specifically the Native Hawaiian women and girls whose data would be collected and analyzed by this resolution’s proposed Task Force, OHA requests to be represented among the members of the Task Force, and respectfully requests that an additional line be added to page 4, line 16, to read as follows:

“(14) The administrator of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, or the administrator’s designee; and”

OHA fully supports this effort and looks forward to participating in this Task Force to better protect and uplift the most vulnerable of Native Hawaiian women and girls.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committees to **PASS** SCR70/SR37. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

⁶ Ho’ōla Nā Pua, Re/imagine: A Capital Campaign to Rebuild Pearl Haven, <https://hoolanapua.org/re-imagine/> (last accessed Mar. 3, 2020).

⁷ ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF SEX TRAFFICKING INTERVENTION & THE HAWAII STATE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, SEX TRAFFICKING IN HAWAII PART II THE STORIES OF SURVIVORS 9 (2019).

⁸ THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS HAUMEA: TRANSFORMING THE HEALTH OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN AND EMPOWERING WĀHINE WELL-BEING 7, 84 (2018).

SR-37

Submitted on: 3/13/2020 2:47:36 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/16/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laurie Field	Testifying for Hawaii Women's Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

SR-37

Submitted on: 3/15/2020 1:16:59 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/16/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laurie Field	Testifying for Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

SR-37

Submitted on: 3/15/2020 9:17:39 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/16/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jessica Munoz	Testifying for Ho'ola Na Pua	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Committees on Human Services and Hawaiian Affairs,

Ho'Ā• la NÄ• Pua is a nonprofit organization committed to the prevention of sex trafficking and providing care for children who have been exploited. We are in strong support of SCR70/SR37 which requests the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women to convene a task force to conduct a study on missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls and to submit a report on the study to the legislature.

As an organization working with children and survivors of trafficking in our state, we see firsthand that the majority of our clients are indigenous women and girls.

Rates of gender-based violence are higher for indigenous women nationwide, and yet, the national report documenting murdered or missing indigenous women released in 2018 by the Urban Indian Health Institute did not include any statistics from Hawai'i.

We need data in order to better protect Native Hawaiian women and girls.

Ho'Ā• la NÄ• Pua is asking the Committees to support this resolution in order to gather the data necessary to increase action, investigate, prevent, and develop interventions to violence against Native Hawaiian women and girls.

Thank you for your consideration and service.

Sincerely,

Jessica Muñoz

President, Ho'Ā• la NÄ• Pua

SR-37

Submitted on: 3/15/2020 10:46:35 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/16/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	No

Comments: