

**HR-115**

Submitted on: 3/16/2021 6:12:37 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/17/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ricardo D Trimillos	Friends of the Royal Hawaiian Band	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha mai! Hawaiian musicians aka troubadors were one of the earliest agents of representation for Hawai'i to the (then) US and to the larger world. The International Period of Hawaiian music begins during the Monarchy period with HRH Lili'uokalani and her immortal "Aloha 'Oe" and continues until today with the outreach provided by the Royal Hawaiian Band and their tour to Europe and such international artists as Robert Cazimero and the late Israel Kamakawiwo'ole. It is these troubadors, purveyors of nā• leo Hawai'i, that have provided the positive image of nā• mea Hawai'i for the world, in many cases at the sacrifice of their own wellbeing and the welfare of their families. This long and distinguished contribution to Hawai'i and Hawaiian identity deserves both recognition and celebration. In the name of the Friends of the Royal Hawaiian Band and their commitment to the heritage of Hawai'i I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically urge the passage of this bill. Besides, it doesn't cost anything!

**HR-115**

Submitted on: 3/16/2021 5:55:41 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/17/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kilin Reece	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I'm writing to introduce myself as the President of the newly formed 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, Kealakai Center for Pacific Strings (KCPS) based in Hawaii. For the past eight years, I've researched the history of royal string bands of the 19th-century Hawaiian Kingdom and their influence on American music and string instrument design. What my research has uncovered is a profound and largely untold chapter in the origin story of our shared modern soundscape.

At the dawn of the 20th century, Hawaiian string bands travelled tirelessly to world's fairs, Chautauquas and on the vaudeville circuits, playing the largest venues of their day. They spread a new Hawaiian style of string driven ensemble music featuring a synthesis of string, brass and reed instruments with virtuosity that has defined and influenced much of what is now considered to be quintessentially "American" music. The musical innovations of this generation are the origin of the most iconic stringed instruments of the modern age, the Martin Dreadnought acoustic Guitar and the Fender Stratocaster electric Guitar.

After several years of research drawn from public and private archives, historical societies, personnel correspondence, recordings, oral histories and collaboration with the C.F. Martin Guitar Company, groundbreaking research has surfaced on the life story of Mekia Kealakai, a Native Hawaiian born into poverty who was the son of a sergeant major in the Royal Guard. Like many at-risk youth today, Mekia found himself in a reform school for juvenile delinquents at the age of 12. What could have led to a lifetime of trouble, instead became a life-changing opportunity through the mentorship of Royal Hawaiian Band leader Henri Berger, who introduced him to music. As he studied legendary composers in the Western classical tradition, Mekia became an accomplished student of theory, harmony and composition, fusing Western classical repertoire with the cosmopolitan traditions of his hometown Honolulu and creating a new Hawaiian ensemble style along with his band mates.

Faced with uncertain political times, Mekia and his generation left the islands to share their unique Hawaiian string band music with audiences throughout the continental United States and around the world, in time becoming internationally renowned ambassadors of Hawaiian culture and music. Playing to audiences of ever-increasing size, without the aid of amplification, these young Hawaiian musicians found themselves at the leading edge of innovation in guitar design that would come to define the sound of the modern age. Mekia began collaborating with the C.F. Martin Guitar Company, the leading manufacturer of acoustic guitars at the time, requesting Martin to make an extra-large jumbo guitar. The Kealakai model would become known as the

Dreadnought guitar – the guitar of choice for Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Gabby Pahinui, the Beatles and Bob Marley, to name a few.

Since our founding only two years ago, Kealakai Center for Pacific Strings has presented four sold out Sovereign String Band concerts featuring award winning Hawaiian musicians Aaron Mahi, Raiatea Helm and Jeff Peterson, joined by premier artists from the worlds of classical and opera to bring this historic legacy to life before contemporary audiences. We have released a CD in collaboration with the Library of Congress of historic Hawaiian string band music from 1904, and our recent exhibition in collaboration with Bishop Museum is currently undergoing development planning to travel to the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville Tennessee 2023-24.

Recognition of the Royal Hawaiian Troubadour Generation and thier seminal contributions to the musical arts is long overdue. I seek support in the designation of Mekia Kealakai's birthday of October 15th, to be added to the state calendar as the "Royal Hawaiian Troubadours Day".

Mahalo nui loa, -Kilin Reece

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Submitted on: 3/16/2021 6:40:34 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/17/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Steven Chock	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Kā• kou,

Due to research done pertaining to Mekai Kealaka'i's works and confirming paperwork found and confirmed through the Martin Guitar Company of Nazerath, Penn.

I ask that this Hr 115 be supported and enacted as a major creation affecting both Hawai'i as well as the USA, and the world from that time through today and the future of the world.

What happened is a very important work that we need to teach and hold proudly through time!

This also allows our keiki more pride in knowing MĀ•kia made a difference in the world!

Me ka ha'aha'a

Steven (Kekai) Chock,

**HR-115**

Submitted on: 3/16/2021 7:41:25 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/17/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Charles Littnan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I only recently learned the how Hawaiian music has influenced so many contemporary styles of American music and how central a role Mekia played as an ambassador for Hawaiian musical culture. His talent, his adventurous spirit, and his loyalty to his kingdom and culture are inspiring and his is a story that should be more well known. Celebrating him and Hawaiian musical history would be a great way to perpetuate this story! I fully support this resolution.

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Submitted on: 3/16/2021 9:53:09 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/17/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mark McGuffie	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This is support for HR115, an important recognition of Mekia Kealakai and the Royal Troubadors!

Mahalo,

Mark McGuffie

**HR-115**

Submitted on: 3/16/2021 11:44:08 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/17/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kevin Chang	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Right on.

**HR-115**

Submitted on: 3/17/2021 8:57:24 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/17/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Heather H. Giugni	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

RECOGNIZING MEKIA KEALAKAI'S BIRTHDAY OF OCTOBER 15 AS ROYAL HAWAIIAN TROUBADOURS DAY

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair LoPresti and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support HR 115, recognizing Mekia Kealakai's birthday of October 15 as Royal Hawaiian Troubadours Day!

At the dawn of the 20th century, during uncertain political times, Kealakai and musicians of his generation left the islands to share their unique Hawaiian string band music with audiences throughout the continental United States and around the world, in time becoming internationally renowned ambassadors of Hawaiian culture and music. Their impact was everlasting, their story hardly known.

Musicians of Hawai'i have made and continue to make important contributions to our community but these early troubadours like Mekia Kealakai who paved the way, introducing our culture – through music - to the world. I hope you will support HR 115.

Heather H. Giugni