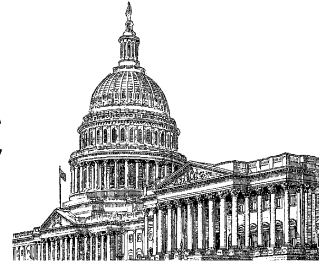


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U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



COUNCIL FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN ADVANCEMENT

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The shaping of public policy can occur in many different ways. It can be done gently and by consensus. It can come as a result of negotiation and compromise. It can occur violently, amid hostile protest. As it relates to setting the course for a more hopeful policy for the benefit of Native people, of Native Hawaiians, it is important that we know our history.

In my 30 years on the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, I have been fortunate to learn about the history of our country and its relations with the indigenous, Native people of this land. It has not been, for the most part, a proud and glorious history.

As a nation, we have changed course many times in the policies which governed our dealings with Native people. We began with treaties between ourselves and the Native tribes, and then we turned to war. We made promises and then broke them. We enacted laws to recognize Native governments, and then we passed new laws to terminate those relationships.

In more recent years, we have worked to restore our relationships with Native governments, and have recognized the rights of our nation's first Americans to self-determination and self-governance.

Similarly, Native Hawaiians have had a political and legal relationship with the United States for the past 183 years, as demonstrated by treaties with the United States, and more recently, by about 190 federal statutes. And, like the Native tribes whose federally recognized status was terminated, Hawaii's monarchy was also terminated and the Native Hawaiian government illegally overthrown. As such, the Native Hawaiian people never voluntarily gave up or extinguished their sovereignty. The Hawaiian protests on Statehood day dampened the commemoration of our 50th

anniversary. There was a sadness, as it bruised our conscience. It made clear to me that reconciliation is long overdue.

With the support of the Obama White House, Senator Akaka and I are confident that the Akaka bill will become law in this Congress. With its passage, a government-to-government relationship can, at long last, be established. Returning to Native Hawaiians their right to self-determination and self-governance, and with it, a measure of dignity and self-esteem. I am hopeful that the healing may then be meaningful and long-lasting.

As a part of this process, I encourage non-Hawaiians to step forward to support Hawaiian self-governance. There is nothing to be afraid of. While we can never hope to repay or restore what was taken or lost, we can and we must do what we can. For me, it is a simple moral obligation and duty.

Native Hawaiians are Native Americans. Alaska Natives are Native Americans. You all have as your right, a cloak of sovereignty. Once Native Americans are deprived of their sovereignty that will be the end of Native America. An attack on one is an attack against all. United, we must stand strong together. Divided, you will fail.

To fully effectuate this policy of Native Hawaiians taking their rightful place next to their tribal brothers, with your permission, I would like to pursue two parallel actions. First, to add Native Hawaiians, where it makes sense, to existing Native set asides by adding additional funds to those accounts.

I promised Native America when I became the Chair of the Indian Affairs Committee that I would never take from their few resources, and give it to the Hawaiians. Rather, parallel Hawaiian programs were established in some areas. By adding monies to the roads, water and community development tribal programs for example, Hawaiians would have a place at the Native American table.

Second, I want to work with you to establish new tribal set asides for Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians – in areas of renewable energy and broadband technology, for example. Let's work together on new opportunities for Native America, in line with the priorities of the Obama White House. This would be both exciting and fulfilling.

What can each of you do to positively shape Native Hawaiian policy? It is very simple. Let us celebrate our successes, and quiet the "talk stink" chatter. Let us be proud of each other's achievements, and not constantly pull each other down like the a'ama crabs in the bucket. If we wallow in self-pity, it very easily becomes a

self-fulfilling prophecy. Conversely, if we aloha and encourage the achievements of our brothers and sisters, the perception of reality is much brighter and hopeful.

I was on Maui last Friday for a few events. The first was to celebrate the designation of the Maui Supercomputer as an official resource center of the Department of Defense because of their outstanding performance. What began as an earmark is today a budgeted Pentagon asset. The man in charge - a Native Hawaiian. Gene Bal.

The next Maui event was also to celebrate an earmark – the Joint Information Technology Center – becoming an official \$20 million dollar program of the Department of Defense. The President & CEO - a Native Hawaiian. Vaughn Vasconcellos.

A few days earlier, I was on the Big Island. I had the good fortune of attending a blessing to kick off, with economic stimulus funds, an environmental cleanup of Pelekane Bay, from mauka to makai. It is a beautiful, historic area, and the home of the Pu'ukōhōla Heiau, a strong symbol of the unifying force of Kamehameha the Great. It is a Historic Site of the National Park Service. The Superintendent - a Native Hawaiian. Daniel Kawaiaea.

The following day, I was so very honored and humbled by a Native Hawaiian welcoming ceremony at the Hawaii Community College in Hilo. It is a place of much promise, where culture so naturally and elegantly embraces the aspects of academic life, from the vocational trades, to culinary arts and the sciences. The Chancellor - a Native Hawaiian. Rockne Freitas.

And, this all happened last week. I could go on and on. Nearly 100 Native Hawaiian doctors have graduated from the University of Hawaii School of Medicine. The University of Hawaii at Hilo offers the first Doctoral degree in Native languages in our nation.

A little bragging would be good. Be proud of yourselves, and be positive about the accomplishments of Native Hawaiians. Perception drives reality, and perceived reality drives policy.

To the young leaders, you provide the hope for a brighter chapter in our nation's history. You carry the torch. You light the path, and make room for others. And, as the path gets bigger, the task becomes less burdensome. Stand tall – steadfast and proud.