

**Hearing
Committee on Indian Affairs
United States Senate
July 20, 2000
Russell Senate Bldg. Room 485
S. 575- A Bill to Amend the Native American Languages Act
Testimony of Dr. Kalena Silva
Director, Ke'elikelani College of Hawaiian Language**

I ola no au i ku'u kino wailua,
I 'a'ea mai e ke ali'i o Kahiki,
Ke ali'i nana i 'a'e ke kai uli,
Kai 'Ele'ele, Kai Melemele,
Kai Popolohuamea A Kane,
I ka wa i po'i ai Ke Kaiakahinali'i,
Kai mu, kai lewa,
Ho'opua ke ao ia Lohi'au,
'O Lohi'au, i lono 'oukou,
Ola e, ola la, ua ola Lohi'au e,
'O Lohi'au ho'i e!

Life has returned to my body,
Its sacredness trampled by the chiefess from a foreign land,
The chiefess who broke the taboos of traveling the deepest ocean,
The Black Ocean, The Yellow Ocean,
The Blue-black-Red-Tinged-Sea of the Deity, Kane
When our land was inundated by The-Flood-Of-Kahinali'i.
The now silent sea, the sea that floats on the horizon,
The floating cloud brings forth Lohi'au.
Yes it is I, Lohi'au,
Body trampled by the foreign chiefess --
I live once again!

E na lala o ke Komike Kuleana 'Ilikini O Ka 'Aha Kenekoa, aloha kakou:

Aloha members of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, I am Dr. Kalena Silva, Director of Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikelani College of Hawaiian Language of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. I have come to testify in complete support of S. 575 , while focusing specifically on the role of Ke'elikelani College's consortium with the 'Aha Punana Leo, a community Native Hawaiian language organization. Like the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, our College is administered through the Native Hawaiian language, has a majority Native Hawaiian staff and administration and is internally self governed. When efforts to revitalize

Hawaiian began 20 years ago, the prognosis for its survival was considerably worse than for most other Native American languages at the time -- communities had lost use of our language much earlier than most other Native American groups. But today, through leadership from the consortium, Hawai'i has the largest growth of fluent young speakers of any Native American language in the United States.

I began my testimony with a declaration by Lohi'au, a lover of Pele, Hawai'i's volcano goddess, whom the goddess meets in her dreams of one of our northerly islands, Kauai'i. On Hawai'i island 300 miles from Lohi'au, Pele sends her sister Hi'iaka to bring Lohi'au to her. In this ancient epic, Hi'iaka falls in love with Lohi'au, inciting Pele to kill him in a jealous rage. Many in Hawai'i know that Lohi'au was killed by Pele, a foreigner who came to Hawai'i over distant seas. However, few know that the epic ends with a brother of Pele's capturing Lohi'au's wandering spirit and coaxing it gently back into his body until he is once again fully alive, as if awakened from a deep sleep.

Like Lohi'au, the Hawaiian language is awakening from near death. Still weak from the disastrous effects of past encounters with those from overseas, recently, our language has increasingly benefitted from the desire and commitment of those same people from overseas to support our efforts to revive it.

My own family is typical in that those born before 1900 were fluent Hawaiian speakers, and those born between 1900 and 1920 replaced Hawaiian with Pidgin English. The loss of Hawaiian was due to relentless anti-Hawaiian language campaigns in the schools initiated as part of Hawai'i's annexation to the United States. While in high school, I developed an interest in learning my ancestral language and pursued it with the help of my grandmother and the then budding efforts to teach Hawaiian in Hawai'i high schools and universities. I am now fluent in the language and use it everyday as the internal administrative language of our college and as the medium of instruction in our undergraduate and graduate courses.

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo began teaching Hawaiian in the 1970s and in 1982 began offering the BA in the language. At around the same time, a group of Hawaiian language teachers and speakers formed the 'Aha PunanaLeo organization to reestablish Hawaiian as a language of the family and of schools. In Hawai'i today, 2,000 children are enrolled in language nests and language survival schools taught primarily in Hawaiian. The first class of graduating seniors graduated in May of 1999, and this year we mark the fifth graduating class. Most graduates have continued on to college, and a few have already earned undergraduate degrees. One graduate is presently working as a Hawaiian translator at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum. Another, now a mother, I have heard speaking Hawaiian to her newborn child. Our language is now becoming stronger, not only in school, but in the home as well.

From the very beginning of our efforts to revitalize Hawaiian, the university and the 'Aha Punana Leo have worked together to provide resources for this educational movement. In 1998, Ke'elikolani College was established through state legislative mandate.

The College has two divisions. The academic programs division is the most developed in a Native American language anywhere in the United States. It includes the bachelor's degree, master's degree, and post-baccalaureate teaching certificate all taught through Hawaiian. Our teaching certificate is the only one in the United States for indigenous immersion targeting language nests and language survival schools. Our Chancellor has approved our development of a doctorate in Hawaiian language

revitalization with assistance from reknowned global language revitalization specialist Dr. Suzanne Romaine of Oxford University. We are expanding the doctoral degree and our Master's in Hawaiian language and culture education to include a track taught through English that will give other indigenous people interested in language and culture revitalization the opportunity to join our students and receive training in this area as well.

The research and outreach division of the College focuses on the application of language revitalization in the community. It includes a curriculum development component for preschool through college, a lexicon committee that develops new words for the schools, an in-service teacher training program for teachers already in the schools, a newsletter, a newspaper for the schools, a Worldwide Web Server, an intranet telecommunications system connecting all Hawaiian language schools and offices in the state. Most recently we have worked on developing a comprehensive Native Hawaiian educational philosophy, standards for Native Hawaiian education, and testing of students. Keiki Kawai'ae'a of our Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education Program is here to provide further information on these programs.

The College's second division also has an extensive outreach program to Native America and the rest of the indigenous world. Besides our connection with Native America, we have ties to the indigenous Pacific Basin including Māori programs in New Zealand, Chinese indigenous education in both the Republic of China and Taiwan, European autochthonous language programs such as those of the Welsh, Sami, and Greenlanders, and some contact with Latin American indigenous language education efforts.

The ʻĀhā Pūnana Leo works very closely with our College. It has powers that our state-funded College lacks and is not impeded by the slowness of government bureaucracy nor by University policies that are not oriented to language revitalization. The ʻĀhā Pūnana Leo runs two curriculum centers, one focusing on print materials -- books, posters, flashcards, maps, etc. and the other focusing on non-print materials -- videos, audio tapes and CDs for television, computer and radio formats. The ʻĀhā Pūnana Leo has a materials distribution office from which, in coordination with KeʻĀhā Pūnana Leo College, materials are sent to schools throughout the state (visit our coordinated websites at www.olelo.hawaii.edu). These materials have been developed using the wealth of materials that our elders have left for us, including seventeen years of taped oral elder interviews by one of our faculty members and a wealth of written materials developed by our ancestors and stored in a variety of public and private depositories in Hawaiʻi and elsewhere. In addition, the ʻĀhā Pūnana Leo has a college scholarship program for those wishing to develop fluency in Hawaiian while pursuing a wide range of majors in college and an administrative office that provides direct support for its current total of 12 schools.

The ʻĀhā Pūnana Leo preschools provide children with the language foundation enabling them to continue learning through the medium of Hawaiian in the public school system. The public school program is provided direction by three model laboratory full Hawaiian medium survival schools that the ʻĀhā Pūnana Leo and KeʻĀhā Pūnana Leo College operate jointly. Each with language nest preschool through grade twelve language survival school, the three laboratory schools are located in different types of

communities -- one urban, one very rural and attended by an isolated community that never lost Hawaiian, and one semi-rural near our University. A strong feature of these laboratory schools is a focus on hands-on learning using Hawai'i's natural environment which provides the basis for Native Hawaiian traditional life.

The consortium between Ka Haka ʻō Ula O Keʻelikōlani and the ʻāhā Pūnana Leo has already been assisting other Native American peoples to establish schools, curriculum, teacher development, and technological support along our model. We have been hosting a steady stream of such visitors over the past few years, providing continued consulting support once they return home. Among groups that we have hosted in the past few months have been Cayuga and Mohawks, Ojibwe, Alutiiq, Crow, Cheyenne and Navajo.

For the past 10 years we have worked closely with the Piegan Institute named in S. 575 as an additional demonstration site. We have provided much assistance to communities in Alaska where the next largest number of Native American immersion students exist after Hawai'i. We have good relations with the excellent Alaska Native Language Center and look forward to working with them as well. The Hawaiian tradition of aloha requires that we extend assistance to others. We believe that as we help others, we help ourselves. This bill will provide the necessary resources to strengthen and disseminate our model -- evolving over 20 years now -- to the many people outside Hawai'i. The bill is written in such a way as to provide a general pathway to successful language revitalization, which speaks to and touches the very core of native people like myself.

Like Lohiʻāu, we Native Hawaiians are experiencing a rekindling of life through the revitalization of our nearly exterminated language. We want to join with other native peoples in similar circumstances throughout the United States so that, together, we may all move forward. Although Lohiʻāu was killed by Pele, her own brother, Kanemiloha'i, brought him back to life. There have been many "Pele" bills in the history of Native American languages, bills that sought to kill our languages. S. 575 is her brother, Kanemiloha'i's bill, and through it, our languages, like Lohi'au, can find new life.

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'O Lohi'au ho'i e!*

The now silent sea, the sea that floats on the horizon,
The floating cloud brings forth Lohiʻāu.
Yes it is I, Lohiʻāu,
Body trampled by the foreign chiefess --
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