



## COUNCIL FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN ADVANCEMENT

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### **CNHA REACTS TO NINTH CIRCUIT RULE**

Honolulu, HI - The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled on *Doe v. Kamehameha Schools* today, affirming Federal District Court Judge Kay's decision in favor of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate and its trustees, but reversing his determination regarding the Kamehameha Schools admissions policy.

"This is a trying day for us all," says Rod Ferreira, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement and I Mua Group President. "The court made it clear today that as Native Hawaiians, we need our political relationship reaffirmed if we are to protect our institutions, our programs and our communities. In short, we need the Akaka Bill, and we need to reorganize our government so that our status as indigenous peoples is crystal clear to everyone."

The Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act, also known as the Akaka Bill, is pending action in the United States Senate and expected to have an up or down vote in September. The bill reaffirms the political relationship between the federal government and Native Hawaiians and creates a process for the federal government to formally recognize a Native government similar to American Indians and Alaska Natives. In short, the bill would give parity among Native peoples within the United States and extend the federal policy of self-determination and self-governance to Native Hawaiians.

"This lawsuit, like the others, is not just about one child's desire to go to Kamehameha Schools, it is about a new movement by a few to kill aloha, to kill our respect for diversity, and to replace it with intolerance and assimilation under the guise of equality," says Robin Danner, President/CEO for the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement. "I ask the people of Hawaii to stand together in seeking clarity by the United States for the Native peoples of our state. I ask you to write letters in support of the Akaka Bill, and to stand up for Hawaii's unique spirit of aloha."

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The decision handed down, remained silent on the political status of Native Hawaiians, which is the center of the Akaka Bill or S.147, named for the bill’s author and only Native Hawaiian in the United States Senate, Senator Daniel K. Akaka. S.147, if passed, would make clear that the Native people of Hawaii have political standing, placing the issue beyond a race-based standard.

Rod Ferriera, President of the I Mua Group, a political action committee consisting of mostly Kamehameha graduates, went on to say “those who oppose the Akaka Bill may be gladdened by today’s decision, indeed responsible with their efforts to kill the bill in Congress – some because of their desire to fully assimilate our Native peoples and others because of their misguided views that the bill somehow thwarts their calls for international intervention. We will continue the fight, not just for ourselves as Hawaiians, but for the entire state of Hawaii, that balances its very identity on the survival of Hawaiian culture.”

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