

EDB Committee

From: Malia Davidson <davidsonmalia@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 08, 2019 12:42 PM
To: EDB Committee
Subject: EDB-24(13) Maui County Law Enforcement Officers
Attachments: EDB-24(13) Maui Law Enforcement.pdf

Aloha Chair Keani Rawlings,

I apologize for the late submittal of this testimony. Hopefully it is still acceptable.

Mahalo for bringing up this important issue to your committee.

Sincerely,
Malia Davidson

August 7, 2019

EDB-24(13) Maui County Law Enforcement Officers Sent to Mauna A Wākea

Dear Chair Rawlings,

Thank you for this opportunity to give my testimony regarding Maui County Law Enforcement Officers Sent to Mauna A Wākea. As someone born and raised on Maui, an educator, counselor, peace studies advocate, and one that is of Hawaiian ancestry, I want to start off with recognizing the importance of our Maui Police Department. As I reflect upon the last months and the tremendous efforts that has impacted our Maui, I feel a sense of pride that our island is still able to come together with great aloha and conviction for helping each other. I believe in my heart that our emergency response personnel have been selected and groomed from their youth to have aloha as part of their character as they are the representatives of what it means to come from islands in the middle of the ocean that must sustain itself. Good relationships and trust are especially important for us to resolve a multitude of human issues quickly.

I believe at the core of all challenges is a lesson that is emerging to be taught and learned. As we all know well, just days before the deployment of our Maui County Police Department to Hawai'i island we experienced massive fires of well over 10,000 acres. Tremendous efforts, all hands on deck, was needed to secure life and property from extreme damage. To have no life lost is an absolute miracle. With the wave of fires and traumatic challenges that have faced us lately, what is the lesson? Who or what caused the massive fires that are still happening? How is this being resolved or curbed in the future. I realize this is one big issue surrounded by so many others. Our police department has incredible responsibility.

I have great concern about having sent our men and women to Hawai'i island right after we suffered a major trauma. According to MPD Chief Tivoli's letter, I understand the request to send personnel are interisland, departmental collaborations however, I would like to point out something that may not have been considered at the time. The people our MPD were supposed to be keeping the community safe from or corralling into submission are some of the most revered, upstanding citizens of our society. They are our kumu hula, doctors, retirees, veterans, farmers, business owners, cultural practitioners, college professors, lawyers, award winning musicians, writers, poets, political and global event organizers, and more. Foremost, they are educators of all of Hawai'i. Most of them hold prominence in our society and clearly serve the communities they come from. They are turned to and called upon by leadership the government, universities, communities when there is need for understanding of various challenges to Hawai'i, her land, and people. They are called upon to serve their communities to inspire and uplift them at all times, good and challenged times.

There has been a precedent set with every demonstration by these same people. Peaceful and non-violent. The voices of the people who have risen to protect what is precious and sacred to them is not an emergency. We live in Hawai'i where we live, are taught, and enjoy life with these same protectors. There is a code of conduct that is unspoken and requires us to connect

further to the depth of wisdom that the kia'i are commanding of all of us. Kapu Aloha is providing a pathway for all of Hawai'i to heal the injustices that have and continue to be done intentionally or unintentionally to the native peoples of this land. Our political leaders hold advanced and complex power which means this requires understanding not only the issue but who we are talking about who are conducting these protections.

I implore you to look at this experience more closely and how this and future actions are responded to. The costs that have been incurred was very expensive not only financially (Chief Tivoli says the County of Hawai'i will cover) but we may not truly understand until later the emotional, mental, and physical effects of that decision on our police forces that were summoned to Mauna Kea. With an already noted shortage of personnel in our police force on Maui, overtime, and also our intense increase of tourist and population boom, we must not engage in frivolous requests anymore and the people must not incur such frivolous financial burdens. **Violence against our people are not acceptable especially when it is not warranted.** It never has been and never will be. It is clear that just because something is "legal" does not make it right as has been demonstrated by many of these protectors who saved Kaho'olawe from further bombing, Hawaiian language (once illegal to be taught in schools), slavery, racial segregation, and so many more.

There are too many cases of this disrespect and breach of trust here on Maui and in Hawai'i by the current established political entity. With what has been recently revealed by Dr. Keanu Sai to the Maui County Council, on two accounts, we must learn the true history of Hawai'i and how it affects us today. Hawai'i is illegally occupied. We can no longer push this to the side. Our population, Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, have become educated and will not let this rest. Speaker of the House Scott Saiki stated to Civil Beat August 4, 2019, " This dispute is not just about TMT, but is about historical wrongs perpetuated by government and institutions such as the military and tourism," As we move forward, it will be important to double check the actions of anyone who is requiring violence against the people. We are seeing it too much nationally. May we never become numb to aloha and recognize that the real threat is our own negative mindsets about old programming that we have become conditioned to follow. May we follow Auntie Pilahi Paki's wisdom and Hawai'i Revised Statutes, Section 5-7.5 entitled "The Aloha Spirit Law" which guides us all to be kind, be in harmony, have humility, and patience. May you and our leaders see the truth behind these negative programs. I have faith that you all will see and grow in this wisdom.

With sincerity and aloha,

Malia Davidson

Kula, Maui