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March 11, 2019

Representative Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair
Representative Stacelynn K.M. Eli, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Dear Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Eli, and Committee Members:

RE: SB 1451, SD1 Relating to State Holidays

The people of Hawai'i are justly proud of the history of the Hawaiian nation, just as we are also proud of our U.S. history. It is not inconsistent to value both ancestries, and one legacy need not, and should not, be sacrificed for the sake of the other.

I would not have a problem if SB 1451 simply added a new holiday to our calendar. However, I remember that in order to establish Martin Luther King Day, there was a belief that we could not add an additional holiday to our schedule, so this Legislature did away with Columbus/Discoverer's Day. If it still is the opinion of the Legislature that there are "too many holidays," then it is appropriate that Good Friday is the holiday to be eliminated, with such action justified in the name of separation of church and state.

Yet another alternative (but I would defer to the advocates whether such an arrangement would be acceptable or desirable) would be to make Hawaiian Recognition Day the fourth Thursday (or even fourth Friday) in November. That would combine the new holiday with Thanksgiving, with which it would overlap every few years anyway.

So long as the new holiday is adopted in a way that honors our Hawaiian heritage without doing damage to our American heritage, I support such legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Kim
MAYOR