

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Francis Nakamoto (202) 225-4906

**CONGRESSWOMAN HIRONO APPLAUDS  
COMMITTEE APPROVAL OF AKAKA BILL**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** --- Calling the Hawaiian federal recognition bill constitutional and “the right thing to do,” Congresswoman Mazie Hirono today applauded the decision by a key House committee to move the measure to the House floor for a vote.

Congressman Neil Abercrombie and Hirono are co-sponsors of the measure, known as the Akaka bill, in the House. Named after Senator Daniel Akaka, an identical measure is set for a hearing tomorrow before the Senate Indian Affairs Committee.

Abercrombie is a member of the House Natural Resources committee, which passed the bill out with a voice vote without any amendments.

The bill sets up a process for Native Hawaiians to organize a governmental entity of their own choosing. It will give Native Hawaiians federal recognition, similar to recognition Congress has granted to American Indians and Alaska Natives and protect programs benefiting Native Hawaiians from certain lawsuits.

Hirono said the bill is long overdue, and urged fellow House members to reject unfounded criticism that it will impact non-Hawaiians.

“There will be no loss of any personal, civil, legal, constitutional or property rights of any non-Hawaiian or Native Hawaiian alike,” Hirono said.

She also pointed out that Native Hawaiians are the only significant indigenous group not yet recognized by Congress.

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In written testimony to the Committee, Hirono stated: “Native Hawaiians have suffered too long and been deprived of rights allowed other Native Americans due to misinformation and misunderstanding by those who oppose this legislation. I urge this committee to favorably report out this bill which takes the first step in recognizing the inherent right of self determination of the Native Hawaiian people. It is not only legal and constitutional; it is the right thing to do.”

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