

**DATE:** May 27, 2021

**TO:** Sen. Mazie Hirono  
Sen. Brian Schatz  
Rep. Ed Case  
Rep. Kai Kahele  
Members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

**FR:** Ka Lāhui Hawai'i;  
Kōmike Kālai'āina;  
Nā Koa Ikaika Ka Lāhui Hawai'i

**Re: Congressional Oversight Hearings in Hawai'i on the Implementation of the Trust Obligations of the United States of America and the State of Hawai'i to native Hawaiians under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, Sections 4 and 5(f) of the Admissions Act, and the Hawaiian Home Lands Recovery Act.**

Aloha,

Over the past few months, ProPublica and the Honolulu Star Advertiser have published a series of articles on the operation and mismanagement of the Hawaiian Home Lands Trust and the resulting poverty, homelessness and deprivation of native Hawaiians in our State. National Geographic has also run articles on the Overthrow and historic challenges that continue to plague Hawai'i today.

These articles verify that for years, the United States has bypassed the legal requirement that federal surplus lands in Hawai'i are to be returned to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. The ProPublica and Honolulu Star Advertiser articles are the result of independent research by investigative journalist, Rob Perez, who has more than 30 years experience as a reporter and editor for newspapers in Guam, Florida, California and Hawai'i.

The last two articles published verify that there are hundreds of old US military homes (turn key) that could and should have been transferred to DHHL for native Hawaiians on the DHHL waiting list but were not. The housing of federal military surplus lands should be transferred to applicants on DHHL's waiting lists now.

**See:**

**1) The U.S. Broke Its Promise to Return Land to Hawaiians. My Family Knows Something About Land Loss, by Rob Perez • 5/26/21**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/the-u-s-broke-its-promise-to-return-land-to-hawaiians-my-family-knows-something-about-land-loss>

**2) The U.S. Owes Hawaiians Millions of Dollars Worth of Land. Congress Helped Make Sure the Debt Wasn't Paid, by Rob Perez • 5/7/21**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/the-us-owes-hawaiians-millions-of-dollars-worth-of-land-congress-helped-make-sure-the-debt-wasnt-paid>

**3) How the Deals Approved by Congress Bypassed Thousands of Hawaiians Waiting for Homes, by Rob Perez • 5/7/21**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/how-the-deals-approved-by-congress-bypassed-thousands-of-hawaiians-waiting-for-homes>

**4) PROMISED LAND: Hawaii's Big Fix to Its Housing Shortage for Native Hawaiians? A Casino, by Rob Perez and Agnel Philip • 12/24/20**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/hawaiis-big-fix-to-its-housing-shortage-for-native-hawaiians-a-casino>

**5) PROMISED LAND: The Government Promised to Return Ancestral Hawaiian Land, Then Never Finished the Job, by Rob Perez and Agnel Philip • 12/19/20**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/the-government-promised-to-return-ancestral-hawaiian-land-then-never-finished-the-job>

**6) PROMISED LAND: To Reclaim Ancestral Land, All Native Hawaiians Need Is a \$300,000 Mortgage and to Wait in Line for Decades, by Rob Perez and Agnel Philip • 10/24/20**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/hawaii-native-land-homesteads-department-of-hawaiian-home-lands>

**7) PROMISED LAND**

**How We Found Low-Income Hawaiians Were Left Behind by the Homesteading Program by Agnel Philip and Rob Perez • 10/24/20**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/how-we-found-low-income-hawaiians-were-left-behind-by-the-homesteading-program>

**8) National Geographic – History & Culture Commentary: Hawai'i is not the multicultural paradise some say it is. The islands still struggle with the legacy of colonialism and the divisions intentionally sown between ethnic groups.**

**BY IMANI ALTEMUS-WILLIAMS AND MARIE ERIEL HOBRO PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARIE ERIEL HOBRO, PUBLISHED MAY 17, 2021**

**9) National Geographic: How white planters usurped Hawaii's last queen The bloodless but brutal coup brought Hawaii's monarchy to an end—and paved the way for U.S. statehood. by Erin Blakemoore, Published May 13, 2021, National Geographic**

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/how-white-planters-usurped-last-hawaiian-queen?loggedin=true>

The investigation by the Honolulu Star-Advertiser and ProPublica has found that Senators Dan Inouye and Dan Akaka had in fact voted several times each to support ...”must-pass legislation that included provisions undermining efforts to repay millions of dollars in land debt to Hawaiians. At least six other current and former members of Hawaii’s congressional delegation have supported such legislation one or more times. Between them, Hawaii’s members of Congress voted for at least six laws authorizing the federal government to sell dozens of excess properties to private parties rather than offering them to a Hawaiian trust established to repatriate the land. In one must-pass military spending bill spanning more than 500 pages, lawmakers slipped in a single sentence that helped a handful of nonprofits to acquire the land. In another, they added language that effectively put the need for military housing ahead of the need for housing Hawaiians.”

The facts indicate that there are hundreds of constructed turn-key homes currently determined to be “surplus” to Federal needs on Oahu & neighbor islands, that have been and are being utilized as rental property. In the meantime, 28,000 Hawaiians continue to languish on waiting lists and an estimated 30,000 have died waiting for access to ancestral lands for housing.

**THE NEED FOR U.S. CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS IN HAWAI'I:**

In light of the above, Ka Lāhui Hawai'i, Kōmike Kālai'āina, and Nā Koa Ikaika Ka Lāhui Hawai'i are requesting immediate Congressional Oversight hearings be undertaken in Hawai'i to initiate a renewed effort to address the extensive and ongoing Breach of Trust on the part of the United States and the State of Hawaii regarding the failure of the government to address its fiduciary obligations to native Hawaiians.

The most recent Perez article reports that the current Hawai'i delegation is aware of the problem and states... “Both of Hawaii’s current U.S. senators have voted for legislation to circumvent the recovery act,

but they now say they will take steps to ensure the trust isn't bypassed going forward. " We would like to participate in addressing ways in which we can remedy the problems now and in the future. We would like to be included in the discussion and resolution of the management of our peoples lands and the provision of housing and shelter for native Hawaiians.

We request that the Hawai'i Congressional Delegation take immediate steps to prevent any further transfer, lease or encumbrance of federal surplus lands currently being "leased" to Hunt Companies Inc. and/or others, including Non-Profit Corporations in Hawaii so that benefits including turn-key housing units can be transferred to the DHHL for management and leasing to native Hawaiians on the waiting list.

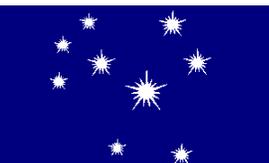
Respectfully submitted,

**Ka Lāhui Hawai'i;**

**Kōmike Kālai'āina;**

**Nā Koa Ikaika Ka Lāhui Hawai'i**

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**KA LĀHUI HAWAI'I**

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