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HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

NO. 230 P. 1  
FROM: COUNCIL DELA CRUZ

**CITY COUNCIL**  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3065 / TELEPHONE 547-7000

**For Immediate Release**  
**April 30, 2008**

**Contact: Keanu Young**  
**Phone: (808) 768-5002**

## **Councilmembers Introduce Legislation to Require New City Signs with Hawaiian Names to Include Proper Hawaiian Spelling**

*Legislation would require the addition of the 'okina and kahakō on city signs with Hawaiian names*

HONOLULU, HI – The Honolulu City Council introduced Bill 39, offered by Councilmember Donovan Dela Cruz and Councilmember Todd Apo. Bill 39 would require any city sign that includes Hawaiian language or Hawaiian names to include the proper Hawaiian spelling, including the diacritical marks - the 'okina and kahakō.

The 'okina is a glottal stop marker and indicates a break in the breath. The kahakō is a marker for an extended vowel and indicates that the vowel sound is to be elongated. The 'okina and kahakō make the proper pronunciation and meanings of many Hawaiian words possible.

Bill 39 would apply to all city signs produced after the effective date of the bill.

Councilmembers Dela Cruz and Apo introduced this bill in response to concerns of constituents over the misspelling of Hawaiian words due to the missing diacritical marks. These concerns were brought to the forefront during a recent dedication of the new comfort station at Ka'a'awa Beach Park where members of the Ko'olauloa community noted the two missing 'okina on the "Ka'a'awa" sign on the comfort station.

"The 'okina and kahakō are a critical part of the Hawaiian language, affecting both the pronunciation and the meaning of Hawaiian words," said Dela Cruz. "It's just the right thing to do."

"Our continued recognition of the Hawaiian language and its part in the Hawaiian culture is vital," said Councilmember Apo. "This bill continues our efforts to recognize the importance of our native language."

Creighton Mattoon, President of the Punalu'u Community Association and member of the Ko'olauloa Hawaiian Civic Club stressed the importance of the legislation.

"As a descendant of the native and indigenous peoples of this pae'aina, I would support this bill because not only will it enhance the proper pronunciation of the words but it will also be an indication of respect for the host culture of Hawai'i nei."

Copies of this legislation can be found on the City's website

<http://www.honolulu.gov/council/index1.htm> .

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**CITY COUNCIL**  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

ORDINANCE \_\_\_\_\_

BILL 39 (2008)

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**A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE**

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RELATING TO HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE SIGNS OF THE CITY.

BE IT ORDAINED by the People of the City and County of Honolulu:

**SECTION 1. Findings and Purpose.**

The council finds that the Constitution of the State of Hawaii ("Constitution") provides for the preservation and promotion of native Hawaiian culture, history, and language. The Constitution also establishes English and Hawaiian as the official languages of Hawaii.

The council, therefore, finds that use of proper Hawaiian is not only appropriate to show the respect for the native language, but is also consistent with the intent of the Constitution. The purpose of this ordinance is to help preserve the native Hawaiian language by requiring that all city signs with Hawaiian names and language include proper Hawaiian spelling.

**SECTION 2.** Chapter 1, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 1990 ("General Provisions"), is amended by adding a new article to be appropriately designated by the revisor of ordinances and to read as follows:

**"Article \_\_. Hawaiian Language Signs of the City and County of Honolulu.**

**Sec. 1-\_\_.1 Definitions.**

As used in this article:

"City" means the government of the City and County of Honolulu.

"City sign" means a public sign as defined under Section 21-7.20 that was prepared by or for the city.

"Kahakō" means a diacritical mark, which is placed above a vowel to indicate a long sound or phonetic value in pronunciation.

"Okina" means a diacritical mark indicating an interruption of the breath stream during speech.



**CITY COUNCIL**  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

ORDINANCE \_\_\_\_\_

BILL 39 (2008)

**A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE**

**Sec. 1-\_\_2 Hawaiian language on city signs.**

All city signs that include Hawaiian language or Hawaiian names shall use proper Hawaiian spelling, including kahakō and 'okina."

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall take effect upon its approval and shall apply to all city signs produced after the effective date.

INTRODUCED BY  
*[Handwritten Signature]*

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DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

**APR 30 2008**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honolulu, Hawaii

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilmembers

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Corporation Counsel

APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MUFU HANNEMANN, Mayor  
City and County of Honolulu