



# NA'I AUPUNI

## NEWS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **NA'I AUPUNI TERMINATES ELECTION PROCESS**

***'Aha Will Go Forward***

***All Registered Candidates  
Will Be Offered Seat As Delegates***

**HONOLULU** – Na'i Aupuni announced today that it has terminated the Native Hawaiian election process but will go forward with a four-week-long 'Aha in February. All 196 Hawaiians who ran as candidates will be offered a seat as a delegate to the 'Aha to learn about, discuss and hopefully reach a consensus on a process to achieve self-governance.

Na'i Aupuni President Kuhio Asam said Na'i Aupuni's goal has always been to create a path so Native Hawaiians can have a formal, long-overdue discussion on self-determination.

"Our goal has always been to create a path so that Hawaiians can gather and have a serious and much-needed discussion about self-governance," Asam said. "We anticipated that the path would have twists and turns and even some significant obstacles, but we are committed to getting to the 'Aha where this long-overdue discussion can take place."

He said due to the delays caused by the ongoing litigation – that could continue for years – it was decided that the most effective route at this point would be to offer to convene all of the remaining delegate candidates and allow them to an opportunity to organize Hawaiians and achieve self-governance.

Na'i Aupuni said Election-America has been informed to stop the receipt of ballots, to seal ballots that have already been received, and to prevent anyone from counting the votes.

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Na'i Aupuni attorney William Meheula said consistent with offering to seat all candidates, Na'i Aupuni has decided that the election votes will never be counted. "Thus, the Akina litigation, which seeks to stop the counting of the votes, is moot, and Na'i Aupuni will take steps to dismiss the lawsuit," he said. "To be clear, Na'i Aupuni does not know and will never learn the election results."

Asam said Na'i Aupuni will manage the process of the 'Aha but not the substance of the discussions. "We have retained Peter Adler and Linda Colburn of The Mediation Center of the Pacific to serve as facilitators to lead the instruction week and to thereafter assist in organizing the delegates," he said. "They will contact the candidates who decide to participate in the 'Aha."

The confirmation deadline to participate in the 'Aha is Dec. 22, 2015. An email will request that the candidates confirm whether they intend to accept the terms and attend the 'Aha that runs the month of February 2016 and will be held at a meeting facility in Kailua, Oahu. On Dec. 23, 2015, Na'i Aupuni will post the list of delegates on its website.

Asam said a key component of the 'Aha is the education and information the delegates will receive during the first week regarding constitution building, federal Indian law, international law regarding de-occupation, decolonization, the rights of indigenous people, U.S. Constitution issues that relate to Native Hawaiian self-governance, the ceded lands claim, background on Hawaiian Home Lands, Kingdom Law and constitutions drafted by sovereignty groups.

### **About Na'i Aupuni**

Na'i Aupuni is an independent organization made up of a volunteer board of directors from the Hawaiian community. It exists solely to help establish a path to an 'Aha, or constitutional convention, where Hawaiians can discuss and explore various options of self-determination. Na'i Aupuni was formed in December 2014 and is separate and independent from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the State of Hawaii. For further information about Na'i Aupuni and a list of the 196 candidates who will be seated as delegates can be found at <http://www.naiaupuni.org/>.

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