



NEWS RELEASE

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NINTH U.S. CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS DENIES ATTEMPT TO STOP NATIVE HAWAIIAN ELECTION

Court Rejects Appellants' "Urgent Motion" to Stop the Counting of Na'i Aupuni Ballots

HONOLULU – The United States Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals today rejected an attempt to stop the counting of votes in the election of delegates to a Native Hawaiian constitutional convention, or 'Aha.

The emergency appeal was filed by plaintiffs who are associated with Grassroots Institute of Hawaii after Hawaii Federal Court Judge J. Michael Seabright ruled in October that the election overseen by the private, nonprofit group Na'i Aupuni could go forward.

The federal appeals court ruling means that the voting that currently is underway by about 89,000 certified Native Hawaiians can continue. The election, which concludes on Nov. 30, will seat 40 delegates to the 'Aha that will commence in February 2016. The outcome of the delegate election will be announced December 1.

"The Ninth Circuit has correctly rejected the Grassroots Institute's second legal attempt to stop the election of delegates, said Na'i Aupuni attorney William Meheula. " This process will empower 40 Hawaiian delegates to make recommendations on self-governance and any such recommendation will go back to the voters for ratification. For those who have expressed concern about the Na'i Aupuni process, Na'i Aupuni directors understand that these are important and sensitive issues, and they ask the voters to consider that the courts have rejected those concerns and to believe in the collective wisdom of the voters and candidates."

(more)

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 for Hawaiian self-determination and is guiding an election, convention and ratification process where all Hawaiians who wish to participate can be heard. 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 the upcoming election, please visit <http://www.naiaupuni.org/>.

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