



## **NEWS RELEASE – REVISED 2:45 P.M.\***

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **NA'I AUPUNI RELEASES LIST OF **152** PARTICIPANTS TO FEBRUARY 'AHA**

**HONOLULU** – Na'i Aupuni today announced the names of **152** Native Hawaiians who will take part in an 'aha, a gathering to broadly discuss self-governance, in February 2016.

The 'aha participants come from the 196 former candidates who stepped forward to run in an election that would have sent 40 of them to a constitutional convention. Na'i Aupuni terminated the election on Dec. 15 because pending litigation would potentially have stalled the counting of the vote for years. Na'i Aupuni, instead, offered all of the then-registered candidates terms to participate in a gathering to discuss self-governance. A total of **152** participants had signed on for the 'aha by the deadline of midnight yesterday.

“Every former candidate had an opportunity to participate and we are excited that a large group of committed persons who represents a broad cross section of the Native Hawaiian community, both in Hawaii and on the continent, will have an opportunity to discuss self-governance,” said Kuhio Asam, Na'i Aupuni president. “Our goal has always been to establish a path to an 'aha where Hawaiians can have a long-overdue discussion on the future of the Hawaiian people.

“These are Hawaiians who have shown a deep commitment to engage in serious, civil discussions on self-governance. We are very happy and encouraged that so many individuals have made a decision to be participants. They deserve everyone's support.”

(more)

A component of the month-long 'aha includes the discussions the participants will engage in with experts during the first week regarding constitution building; federal Indian law; international law regarding de-occupation, decolonization and the rights of indigenous people; U.S. Constitution issues that relate to Native Hawaiian self-governance; ceded lands; and Kingdom Law.

Peter Adler and Linda Colburn of The Mediation Center of the Pacific will serve as facilitators to lead the discussions with the experts and to assist the participants in organizing themselves. Thereafter, whatever happens at the 'aha will be completely up to the participants without interference by Na'i Aupuni or any government entity.

A list of the participants to the 'aha is attached.

\* "Through no fault of the individual or Na'i Aupuni, Janice Ringler was not included in the original list of participants. She has been added to the list. Her acceptance has been verified as being sent in well before the deadline, but delivered by the electronic carrier past the due date."

### **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, 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. Further information about Na'i Aupuni and the 'aha can be found at <http://www.naiaupuni.org/>.

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