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After Rewrite of Akaka Bill is Abandoned, Democrats Pass Original Text of Native Hawaiian Recognition Bill out of House Committee

Hastings: "Rush to adopt rewrite was stopped, but constitutional concerns remain."

WASHINGTON, DC –House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) released the following statement today following Committee passage of H.R. 2314, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2009:

"It was the correct course of action for Democrats to abandon their rush to adopt the proposed changes to the Akaka Bill at today's hastily-scheduled markup.

"With both the Attorney General and Governor of Hawaii announcing their strong opposition to the proposed revisions to this bill, moving forward would have been irresponsible and highly alarming.

"Regardless of the fact that the proposed rewrite was dealt a blow at today's Committee hearing, fundamental concerns about the unconstitutionality of this legislation remain. These questions must be squarely addressed and I intend to ask the U.S. Attorney General to directly state the views of the Department of Justice on the constitutionality of the Akaka bill.

"At the outset of the hearing, Republicans expressed their fundamental constitutional concerns with this effort to create a separate governing entity for Native Hawaiians, and served full notice to Committee Democrats that we intended to use every House rule and parliamentary tool available to us to insist our concerns be heard. Until Representative Abercrombie stated his intentions to not push forward the proposed changes, Republicans demonstrated their dedication to using all tools available to them.

"As my colleagues continue to work on this legislation, I hope they not only address these constitutional concerns but do so in a manner that allows everyone the opportunity to thoroughly review and comment on any changes that are proposed."

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