



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **NA'I AUPUNI ANNOUNCES PARTICIPANT TOTAL FOR FEBRUARY 'AHA IS 154**

**HONOLULU** – Na'i Aupuni announced today that 154 individuals will participate in the February 'aha to discuss self-governance.

Additional participants were added to the initial list after Na'i Aupuni learned that delays and failures with electronic carrier systems beyond the former candidates' control caused their communications confirming their intent to participate to not be received in a timely manner. Two other persons who had previously confirmed their intent to attend notified Na'i Aupuni that they now are unable to attend.

The 'aha participants are derived from a list of 196 former candidates who stepped forward in an election that would have resulted in 40 of them attending a constitutional convention. Na'i Aupuni terminated the election on December 15 because pending federal litigation likely would 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 a path to self-governance.

"Every former candidate had an opportunity to participate in this gathering. We are excited that such a large group of committed persons – who represent a broad cross section of the Native Hawaiian community in Hawaii and elsewhere – will come together to discuss self-governance," said Kuhio Asam, Na'i Aupuni president.

(more)

Asam said the 'aha participants are Hawaiians who have shown a deep commitment to engage in serious, civil discussions on self-governance. "We are pleased and encouraged that so many individuals have made a decision to participate," Asam said. "They deserve everyone's support."

A component of the month-long 'aha will be discussions in which participants will engage with experts during the gathering's first week on topics that include: constitution building; federal Indian law; international law regarding de-occupation, decolonization and the rights of indigenous people; U.S. constitutional 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 foster discussions and to assist the participants in organizing themselves. Thereafter, decisions made and results of the participants' discussions at the 'aha will be their responsibility without interference by Na'i Aupuni or any government entity.

The final list of participants is attached.

### **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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