January 26, 2014

Testimony by the Kona Hawaiian Civic Club in STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 2736 Relating to Food Labeling

Welina mai Chairman Green and members of the Committee on Health,

The Kona Hawaiian Civic Club ("KHCC"), founded prior to statehood in 1952, is an organization devoted to education and scholarship. It has advocated for the rights of indigenous Hawaiians’ and the general public at large for many years.

As such, the KHCC strongly supports Senate Bill 2736. The KHCC believes that the people of Hawai‘i have the right to know what they are taking into their bodies, as this is a basic essential function of all forms of life.

Queen Liliuokalani, the last reigning monarch of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i believed in the capacity of the people and building their strengths through education. Education is a basic Hawaiian cultural value. Hawaiian language literacy rates for Native Hawaiians from 1840 through her reign have been estimated at greater than 90%. Over the years, up until 1948, nearly 70 different newspapers were published in Hawaiian, and Hawaiian was the language generally used by the Territorial Legislature through the turn of the century (Readingonline.org – Electronic Classroom Technology and the Hawaiian Language).

Now, as the 50th state of the United States of America, the KHCC would like to share the following quotes from one of the Founding Fathers and past President, Thomas Jefferson:

"No other sure foundation [than public education] can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness... Preach a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against the evils [of misgovernment]."

"I hope we shall... crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations, which dare already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country."
"The selfish spirit of commerce knows no country, and feels no passion or principle but that of gain."

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide this testimony as authorized by the Kona Hawaiian Civic Club.

Charles Flaherty,
Chair, Government Relations Committee