



SACRED LIGHT 'OHANA

March 17, 2026

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued service to our communities. I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB1939 HD2.**

My name is La'akea Ching. I am a Hawai'i-based producer and Founder of Sacred Light 'Ohana, an organization dedicated to building global pathways for Hawai'i's creative community through workforce development, education, and culturally grounded creative programming. Most recently, our team worked on *In Whose Name*, ranked among the top 10 films of 2025 by the Los Angeles Times. Our work opens the door for local creatives to access global-level opportunities while remaining rooted at home and grounded in their identity.

I previously submitted testimony in support of HB1939 HD1 and write again to express that the amendments made in HD2 have meaningfully strengthened this measure. The additions made by the Committee on Finance reflect exactly the kind of structural thinking that transforms a good incentive program into a genuine workforce development tool.

Three amendments in HD2 stand out. The additional 5% credit for productions meeting local workforce thresholds, starting at 80% local hires and scaling upward over consecutive years, turns production activity into direct career development for Hawai'i residents. The 3% credit for indigenous content recognizes in statute what our organization works toward every day, that authentic storytelling has real economic value. And the above-the-line local hiring bonus directly incentivizes productions to cast and hire Hawai'i-based directors, producers, writers, and actors in roles that have historically gone to outside professionals.

Together these provisions move HB1939 HD2 beyond a tax credit bill and into the territory of genuine economic development policy. Productions will now have financial incentive to hire locally, tell indigenous stories, and develop Hawai'i talent at every level of production. **That is the kind of impact that shapes creative careers and cultural identity for generations, creating the conditions for our perspectives, our voices, and our stories to reach global audiences on our own terms.**

Mahalo again for your time and continued commitment to this important measure. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1939 HD2.

With appreciation,

La'akea Ching

Founder & Executive Director