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# Local News

HonoluluAdvertiser.com  
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## Museum's proposal opposed

By Vicki Viotti  
Advertiser Staff Writer

Some Hawaiian organizations and individuals have united against a Bishop Museum proposal that it be recognized as a Native Hawaiian organization qualified to make claims on cultural objects under federal law.

Representatives gathered yesterday at the museum to deliver a petition signed by about 300 opponents of a proposed museum policy. The museum opened the proposed policy to public comment in July and is accepting comments through today.

The museum's most outspoken critic on the issue, the nonprofit group Hui Malama I Na Kupuna O Hawai'i Nei, spearheaded the petition drive.

Members were joined in the announcement by Vicky Holt Takamine of the 'Ilio'ulaokalani Coalition; Lilikala Kame'leihiwa, a professor at the University of Hawai'i Center for Hawaiian Studies; Guy Kaulukukui, the museum's former vice president for cultural studies; and Frenchy DeSoto, a longtime Hawaiian activist.

Hui member Eddie Halealoha Ayau said the policy would make it easier for the museum to block return of burial objects and other cultural treasures to Native Hawaiians under the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. That law halts a repatriation proceeding if a recognized Native Hawaiian organization that makes a claim raises an objection, he said.

Some Hawaiians, such as DeSoto, construe the museum's stance as interference with the traditional Hawaiian religious reverence of ancestral remains.

"Freedom of religion? Freedom for who? Not us, in choosing our native religion," she said.

Kame'leihiwa called for the resignation of museum director Bill Brown and said the museum cannot be considered Hawaiian "until it has undone

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the wrongs of the past." Among them she cited the museum's work in assisting the routing of the H-3 freeway "over the bones of our ancestors."

In a prepared statement, Brown said that in the museum's two-month comment period a "wide variety of views have come in."

"Hui Malama's comments will be considered along with all the others, and a final guidance will then be issued," he said.

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