



**STATE OF HAWAI'I**  
*KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAI'I*

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
*KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA*

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
*KE KIA'ĀINA*

**ANNE LOPEZ**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL  
*LOIO KUHINA*

**HAWAI'I'S FIRST EVER "DO THE WRITE THING" STUDENT  
AMBASSADOR CHOSEN TO REPRESENT HAWAI'I AT NATIONAL  
SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON D.C.**

News Release 2025-55

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 21, 2025

HONOLULU — In a powerful reflection on the realities of youth violence, Wai'anae Intermediate School eighth grader Keziah Chloe Bacor was selected to represent Hawai'i at the National Do the Write Thing (DtWT) Summit for her personal essay titled, "Why Violence?" The piece was written as part of a classroom assignment challenging students to examine how violence has impacted their lives and what they can do to create change. Keziah becomes Hawai'i's first DtWT student ambassador and will travel to Washington, D.C., this July to share her story on a national stage.

DtWT is a national writing program that empowers middle school students to become changemakers by exploring the root causes and impacts of youth violence. Through classroom discussions and personal reflection, students write essays responding to three key questions: What are the causes of youth violence? How has violence affected your life? What can you do to reduce youth violence?

"I am thrilled by the overwhelming success of this program as it engages our youth and inspires future generations to speak out against violence and bullying in their homes, schools and communities," said Governor Josh Green, M.D.. "Their dedication to

promoting peace and addressing youth violence also designates them as Hawai'i's Ambassadors for Peace.”

“Do the Write Thing is an inclusive and equitable program for all middle school students. The writings submitted aren't judged by grammar or academic skill, but by the power of the ideas and lived experiences they share. This isn't a writing contest—it's a platform for young voices, and a powerful movement for change,” said Amber Moyer, DtWT Program Director, Washington, D.C.

Keziah's essay will be published with the writings of her peers from across the country. The anthology is archived at the Library of Congress. The students will also meet with members of Congress to share their perspectives and advocate for a future free from violence during a four-day summit.

“In the beginning of my eight-grade year, many violent acts occurred in our community. Four shootings happened in a span of four weeks. After that, I've never been more careful of my surroundings or my family's,” said Keziah. “Along with this writing challenge, my classmates and I were able to talk to Congresswoman Jill Tokuda and AG Anne Lopez about what was happening in our community, as well as doing sign waving to promote awareness in front of our school. Doing this allowed me to express my feelings about the violence that I have been bottling up inside me. I never thought I would win this competition but I'm forever grateful that I did. I would tell other students let your emotions out. You don't have to be scared.”

The Department of the Attorney General and the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) launched DtWT at the start of the 2024–25 school year, with Wai'anae Intermediate serving as the pilot site.

“This year has presented significant challenges for our community. However, this writing initiative has given our students a voice, empowering our students to become active agents of change,” Wai'anae Intermediate School Principal John Wataoka said.

“Through their reflective work, our students showed a deep consideration of the unseen impacts of violence and were afforded a positive outlet for expressing their feelings, one that often sparks a discourse of ideas toward potential solutions.”

“Each year, millions of young lives are shaped by violence, leaving behind deep physical and emotional scars,” Attorney General Anne Lopez said. “I am thankful to the Department of Education and my staff for their hard work implementing DtWT this school year. Together, we are already looking at expanding the program to other schools across the state. We want it to become a tool and platform for our youth to express their thoughts and ideas in writing about addressing youth violence.”

From the start of the school year, Wai‘anae Intermediate educator Nicole Kurata guided 27 students through meaningful conversations that encouraged empathy, self-reflection, and a commitment to positive change. Students were invited to submit essays or poems of up to three pages for consideration.

Essays were reviewed by a selection panel that included Attorney General Lopez; Department of Law Enforcement Director Mike Lambert; HIDOE Deputy Superintendent Heidi Armstrong; Nānākuli-Wai‘anae Complex Area Superintendent Disa Hauge; and Ashley Atisanoe of the Wai‘anae Coast Community Mental Health Center.

For more information on the national Do the Write Thing Program, visit [www.dtwt.org/program](http://www.dtwt.org/program). Photos and video from today’s ceremony at Washington Place can be found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/0dmqmrxecpd9524ptej23/AJBQUafFXUVJxq19w1ZoAXc?rlkey=mj44116a1arukenuolxblugez&st=rxl6jhtf&dl=0>

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