



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

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

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

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

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

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HONOLULU — Wai'anae Intermediate eighth-grade student Sanoe Tenise was selected to represent Hawai'i at the National Do the Write Thing (DtWT) Summit for her personal essay titled ["Raised by Struggle, Driven by Strength."](#) 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. Sanoe becomes Hawai'i's second 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?

"Through programs like Do the Write Thing, our students are finding their voices and helping shape solutions to challenges facing their communities," said Governor Josh

Green. “I am so proud of Sanoe and all the students who participated. Their insight, honesty and commitment to making a difference give us great hope for Hawai‘i’s future.”

“Do the Write Thing is proud to recognize and celebrate Hawaii’s National Student Ambassador for their powerful voice and commitment to creating positive change. Founded by the Kuwait-America Foundation as a program rooted in peace, Do the Write Thing empowers young people to share their experiences and offer solutions to end youth violence in their communities,” said DtWT Program Director Amber Moyer. “Through this experience, students not only represent their communities but also contribute to a growing national dialogue driven by youth voices and leadership.”

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

“Youth violence affects my life in so many ways that people barely recognize. It is a difference in the way I trust others, communicate and even envision my future,” said Sanoe Tenise, DtWT Student Ambassador and Wai‘anae Intermediate student. “I want to be one who breaks the cycle instead of continuing it. Coming from a rough place doesn’t mean we can’t choose a better path.”

“We are incredibly proud of Sanoe for being selected to represent Hawai‘i on the national stage,” said John Wataoka, principal of Wai‘anae Intermediate School. “Her voice reflects the strength, resilience and perspective of our students. I also want to acknowledge all our students who participated in this program. Their honesty, courage and willingness to share their experiences are what make this effort so meaningful and impactful.”

“Do the Write Thing gives students a meaningful opportunity to reflect on their experiences and use their voices for change,” said Nicole Kurata, teacher at Wai‘anae Intermediate School. “Sanoe’s writing stood out for its honesty and strength, and I’m incredibly proud of her and all of our students who shared their stories.”

“Our youth are not just participants in this conversation, they are leaders,” said Attorney General Anne Lopez. “Through Do the Write Thing, they are identifying challenges in their communities and offering thoughtful, meaningful solutions. We are proud of their work and grateful for our partnership with the Department of Education in making this program possible.”

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, the program expanded to three schools – Lāna'i High and Elementary, King Intermediate and Wai'anae Intermediate – with 95 student submissions received.

From the start of the school year, participating classrooms from Lāna'i High and Elementary, Wai'anae Intermediate and King Intermediate were guided by their instructors through meaningful conversations that encouraged empathy, self-reflection and a commitment to positive change. Students were then invited to put their thoughts and ideas into essays or poems for consideration.

The writings were reviewed by a selection panel that included Attorney General Lopez; Department of Law Enforcement Director Mike Lambert; HIDOE Deputy Superintendent Heidi Armstrong; Isaac Wang, director of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Writing Center and Gregory Tjapkes, executive director of the Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai'i.

For more information on the national Do the Write Thing Program, visit [www.dtw.org/program](http://www.dtw.org/program).

Photos, video and soundbites from the ceremony at the State Capitol Auditorium can be found here:

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/mzo7tgp88g3apxspx8vd3/AHrXRpcPPo93dlm\\_A7wwW38?rlkey=1j9gmp5k3ov0ncy1k6tkti6ut&st=mqdrb0yy&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/mzo7tgp88g3apxspx8vd3/AHrXRpcPPo93dlm_A7wwW38?rlkey=1j9gmp5k3ov0ncy1k6tkti6ut&st=mqdrb0yy&dl=0)

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