



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2023

For Information:

Kimberly Moa, 808.203.9945

kmoa@acluhawaii.org

ACLU OF HAWAI'I CONTINUES STRATEGIC GROWTH WITH ADDITION OF NEW FIELD ORGANIZERS CASSANDRA CHEE AND KYLIE AKIONA

HONOLULU: The ACLU of Hawai'i is excited to announce the addition of **Cassandra (Cassie) Chee and Kylie Akiona** as the new **Senior Organizer** and **Field & Digital Organizer**. The new hires are part of a strategic expansion by the local ACLU affiliate to build capacity and reach in its effort to protect and advance civil and human rights and liberties for the people of Hawai'i.

“Centering the experiences of directly impacted people is a vital part of our field organizing work at the ACLU of Hawai'i,” said **Executive Director (Interim), Scott Greenwood**. “Engaging a diverse group of allies in effective and substantive policy action and empowering volunteer leaders to mobilize support will bring about systemic change here in Hawai'i.”

On her role as the ACLU of Hawai'i's **Senior Organizer, Cassie Chee** said, “As a non-Hawaiian whose family emigrated here to work on the sugar plantations, my kuleana is to transform our systems by empowering leaders, including in [Kānaka 'Ōiwi](#), Micronesian, and other marginalized communities. Those who've been raised by and have direct genealogies to this 'āina and those most impacted by the daily violence of settler colonialism are best positioned to stand at the forefront of the fight for civil and human rights here in Hawai'i. We have the power to create a healthy, just, and thriving community when the most oppressed among us lead.”

Raised on Duwamish land in Kirkland, Washington, Cassie moved to O'ahu in 2020 to be with her paternal Grandmother. She is grateful to be the fifth generation of her family to call Hawai'i home. Prior to joining the ACLU team, she was the Director of Community Organizing at [Faith Action for Community Equity](#), an interfaith grassroots nonprofit that focuses on furthering the health and wellbeing of communities in Hawai'i. She holds a B.F.A in Visual Communication Design from the University of Washington and a Master's of Divinity from Garrett–Evangelical Theological Seminary. She is currently a Member in Discernment pursuing ordination as a Pastor with the Hawai'i Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Kylie Akiona originally joined the ACLU of Hawai'i in January 2021 as a part-time Field Organizing Intern. In their expanded role as a full-time **Field & Digital Organizer** they will be part of an interdisciplinary cross-departmental team that broadens the reach of the organization's field and communications work.

"I am incredibly grateful for all the opportunities working at the ACLU of Hawai'i has given me and I am excited to work on issues I care about full-time," said Kylie of their newly expanded position. "As Kanaka 'Ōiwi, I look forward to weaving the cultural values that are important to me, like aloha 'āina, in my work around decarceration, decriminalization, and the liberation of our lāhui and all the people of Hawai'i and Oceania from the colonial harms of the criminal legal system, economic oppression, and racial hegemony. It is far past time for all of us to recognize that our [kaiāulu](#) keeps us safe. I am committed to grounding myself in our Indigenous ways of being and to looking beyond carceral systems of policing and prisons in my search for solutions. I hope to further and more deeply engage with and empower impacted folks and other community members to protect the rights of our people and bring forth the [hulihia](#) we deserve."

Kylie was born and raised on O'ahu and currently lives in the ahupua'a of Waipi'o with their 'ohana. A recent graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, they have a B.A in Political Science with a minor in American Studies. They also serve on the Honolulu Youth Commission as the councilmember-appointed Youth Commissioner for City & County District 2 and are a member of Hui Aloha 'Āina o Honolulu.

"The collective experience and dedication of the Field team in building community and transforming the political landscape through grassroots advocacy will bring new power to our work and broadens the reach and impact of the civil rights movement in Hawai'i. We are thrilled to welcome them to the team," said Greenwood.

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The mission of the Hawai'i affiliate of the ACLU is to protect the civil liberties contained in the state and federal constitutions through litigation, legislative and public education programs. The ACLU is funded primarily through private donations and offers its services at no cost to the public. The ACLU does not accept any government funds.