

## COMMITTEE FOR EQUITY IN WOMEN'S SURFING

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Thursday, March 12, 2020

## PRESS RELEASE

### State of Hawaii Honors Women World Champions & Advocates

On March 10, 2020, the Hawaii State House of Representatives unanimously approved a Resolution in honor of women surfing advocates and women world champions.

Hawaii State Representatives Lauren Matsumoto and Sean Quinlan invited world champions Paige Alms, Keala Kennelly, Carissa Moore, Honolua Blomfield and advocates for women's surfing Sabrina Brennan, Betty Depolito and Carol Philips to the State Capitol to receive certificates of achievement on the House floor.

The Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing supports future State of Hawaii legislation requiring all sports competitions that award prize compensation, and are held solely on land, property, roadways or facilities owned by the state, to include gendered categories (a division for women and a division for men) with identical prize compensation at each participant level.

In her speech, Rep Lauren Matsumoto recognized the following co-founders of the Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing:

**Paige Alms** is a self-taught and self-motivated big wave surfer from Maui. At the age of 15, Paige's first big wave session had her hooked. She worked hard, literally. She worked as many jobs as she could to pay for her gear and travel expenses so that she could compete in surf tours. While most surfers had sponsors to fund their ability to compete, Paige did it on her own. And it paid off! Paige was the very first female Big Wave World Champion and has won three World Champion titles. Paige is a surfer that is deeply invested in surfing for a greater purpose: one that is based on values that inspire women to dream big and accomplish their goals. One of her goals is going to the Olympics, she will be competing with Team Canada at the ISA games in El Salvador this May, which is the last Olympic qualifier.

**Keala Kennelly** is a professional surfer from Kauai, Hawaii who began competing professionally at the age of 17 and quickly rose to the top of the ranks as one of the best female surfers in the world. Victory after victory, tour after tour, Keala spent a decade ranked in the top ten of the ASP World Championship Tour winning accolades and setting records. Making history for female surfing, she won the first women's big wave contest at the Nelscott Big Wave Classic in 2010, in a historic first for women she beat out the best male big wave surfers in the world winning the 2016 Pure Scot Barrel Award and in another game changing first she was the first woman invited to be a competitor in the 2018 Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational and she won the 2018 Big Wave World Championship. Keala is an innovator and she's opened the door for professional women big wave surfers.

**Sabrina Brennan** is a political advocate for the inclusion of women in big wave surf competitions. Sabrina has served as a Harbor Commissioner on the San Mateo Harbor District since 2012. In 2015, she successfully advocated for the inclusion of women in the Mavericks big wave surf competition. She co-founded the Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing that has led the charge for quality, inclusion, equal access, and equal pay in professional surfing. Her work is the subject of two documentary films and hundreds of news stories including the New York Times Magazine feature titled "The Fight for Gender Equality in One of the Most Dangerous Sports on Earth" (<https://nyti.ms/2TIT5ys>). Her perseverance and determination benefits every single woman surfer and has helped them showcase their athletic talent around the globe.

Increasing the number of events and the number of awards for women, as well as offering equal prize money, is the only way to achieve meaningful equity in competitive sports.

**Honolulu Star Advertiser**, March 10, 2020: <https://bit.ly/2ve8QUt>

**Surfer Today**, March 12, 2020: <https://bit.ly/2wO2UCe>

CEWS Co-Founders include:

- Bianca Valenti, Co-Founder, Instagram: @biancavalenti
- Andrea Moller, Co-Founder, Instagram: @andreamollermaui
- Keala Kennelly, Co-Founder, Instagram: @kealakennelly
- Paige Alms, Co-Founder, Instagram: @paigealms
- Sabrina Brennan, Co-Founder, Instagram: @sabrinarjbrennan

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