

Fallen officers memorial finally a reality

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Hawaii is the only state in the US that does not have a memorial for our fallen law enforcement officers.

But that's about to change.

Governor Abercrombie signed a bill into law this afternoon that requires the construction of a state law enforcement memorial.

Sixty officers from all branches of Hawaii's law enforcement community died or were killed while protecting and serving the people of our state.

This memorial will honor their sacrifices.

Joan Gribbin-Aiu remembers July 21st, 1995 like it was yesterday.

"I was taking Tiffany to a doctor's appointment and I remember getting a phone call at the doctor's appointment and falling to the ground. I just couldn't believe it was true," said Gribbin-Aiu.

Honolulu Police Officers Bryant Bayne and Tate Kahakai were killed that day in a helicopter crash while trying to rescue lost hikers at Sacred Falls.

Bayne was the father of Joan's daughter Tiffany.

Since her father's death, Tiffany would ask Joan why Hawaii doesn't have a memorial like the one in Washington, DC.

"Always wondered and asked us why she had to travel so far to see his name on this wall. And I never had an answer for her," said Gribbin-Aiu.

Joan and her husband Tommy Aiu have been on a mission to get a memorial erected in honor of all of 60 fallen law enforcement officers in Hawaii.

"Families need a place where they can go to grieve, celebrate birthdays, bring visitors to. They need that, they need that," said Gribbin-Aiu.

Well soon, they will have one -- thanks to State lawmakers and Governor Abercrombie.

HB1622 grants the Hawaii Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation the land to build a memorial.

Specifically in this hillside behind the Kalanimoku Building in the Capitol District of Downtown Honolulu.

"I'm just so happy for all the families that will finally have a place to go," said Gribbin-Aiu.

Families like Donna Borengasser, whose boyfriend Officer Danny Padayao, was killed in 2001, after a drunk driver hit him while he was placing flares on the road near Kualoa Ranch.

This Saturday will mark the 10th anniversary of his death.

Donna has been waiting for this moment, and says Danny is probably looking down from heaven.

"He's a character and he's saying oh yeah, it's about time!" said Borengasser.

As for Joan, this mission she's been on has also given her the will to live.

She's been battling stage 4 breast cancer.

"This Memorial Foundation has given me the drive to go on. I have to see this happen," said Gribbin-Aiu.

You're probably wondering what will the memorial look like?

Well, the winning design will be unveiled during Police Week next month.

It was done by a UH Architecture student.

The memorial will be paid for entirely through donations.

They need \$1M, and so far have about \$100K.

If you'd like to help, visit: www.hlemf.org