HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT A POLICY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF A PEDAGOGY OF ALOHA IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR IMPROVED LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

WHEREAS, on September 13, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Declaration), thereby establishing a comprehensive framework for the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples around the globe; and

WHEREAS, Article 15 of the Declaration states that "indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information" and that "States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society"; and

WHEREAS, on April 23, 2009, Senate Resolution No. 147 was passed, urging the President of the United States and United States Congress to adopt the Declaration, and cited the need to "preserve and maintain the Hawaiian culture, to protect and promote the human rights of the kanaka maoli, the indigenous people of Hawaii, and to support the efforts of the kanaka maoli to pursue environmentally sustainable economic, social, and educational activities to ensure the survival of their culture"; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article X, Section 4 of the Hawaii Constitution, the State is responsible for providing for "a Hawaiian education program consisting of language, culture, and history in the public schools"; and
WHEREAS, the Board of Education (BOE) is charged with integrating Hawaiian language, culture, and history into the State's public school system; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Act 51, Session Laws of Hawaii 2004, the goal of which was to reform education in Hawaii, "education must do no less than advance the endowment of human culture itself, so that each succeeding generation finds itself further along the road towards peace, social justice, and environmental sustainability in a society guided by creativity, compassion, and curiosity"; and

WHEREAS, the development of educational philosophies and practices that embody indigenous pedagogical perspectives is fundamental to empowering children to be effective, contributing members of a globalized and culturally-diverse world; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of native Hawaiian cultural perspectives in the State's public school system is critical to providing Hawaii's indigenous and non-indigenous students with a dynamic and culturally-based education that fosters tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect between people; and

WHEREAS, despite attempts by the Legislature to reform education in Hawaii, the public school system continues to follow mainstream, Western pedagogical paradigms at the expense of including indigenous strategies of knowledge construction and dissemination; and

WHEREAS, a lack of safety, security, and practice of Hawaiian values in Hawaii's public schools correlates directly with the high dropout rates observed in schools around the state; and

WHEREAS, schools that practice Hawaiian cultural values, such as aloha -- the Hawaiian cultural principle of aloha that entails the love of self, family, and the wider community -- are less likely to encounter high incidences of assault, prejudice, sexual abuse, and harassment; and

WHEREAS, the evolution of a pedagogy that is commensurate with the cultural, social, and economic realities of Hawaii is critical to the future of education in this state; and
WHEREAS, a pedagogy of aloha is grounded in the wisdom and values of a native Hawaiian worldview and strives to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, and inclusiveness among teachers, students, and students' families; and

WHEREAS, a pedagogy of aloha provides students with an effective learning environment in which they feel nurtured, safe, and encouraged to achieve the highest level of success in everything they do; and

WHEREAS, Na Lei Na'auao (the Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance), which is made up of 12 Hawaiian-focused public charter schools serving over 4,000 students from kindergarten to grade 12 on three islands, has successfully integrated a pedagogy of aloha for the past decade; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of a pedagogy of aloha by Na Lei Na'auao schools has resulted in increased student attendance and graduation rates, and reduced dropout rates, which is in stark contrast to other Department of Education schools; and

WHEREAS, the entire education system in Hawaii will benefit from the formation of an integrated pedagogy in which indigenous knowledge interfaces with conventional educational practices; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that BOE is requested to adopt a policy for the integration of a pedagogy of aloha in public schools for improved learning in the 21st century; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the Board of Education, Superintendent of Education, Executive Director of the Charter School Administrative Office, President of the University of Hawaii, President of Hawaii Pacific University, President of Chaminade University, the Mayor of each county, Dean of the College of Education of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Dean of the College of Education of the University of Hawaii at Hilo, Director of the University of Hawaii at Manoa Hawaiian Studies...
Program, and Director of the University of Hawaii at Hilo Hawaiian Studies Program.