WHEREAS, too many of our seniors suffer devastating and many times deadly injuries due to falls; and

WHEREAS, one third of our kupuna fall each year; and

WHEREAS, every five hours a senior is injured so severely by a fall that the senior must be hospitalized, often never returning home; and

WHEREAS, in Hawaii, on average, emergency room, hospitalization, rehabilitation and long-term care costs directly related to senior falls total $92 million dollars per year, which equals $252,000 per day; and

WHEREAS, the physical and emotional cost to our families is incalculable; and

WHEREAS, falls are preventable and are not inevitable due to aging; and

WHEREAS, balance screening, medication reviews, and vision examinations are just some of the programs that can help determine those seniors who are at risk of falling; and

WHEREAS, a variety of evidence-based best practice programs can prevent falls, especially when incorporated with tai chi or other exercise programs; 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 the University of Hawaii (UH) Center on Aging is requested to convene a Hawaii State Fall Prevention Task Force (Task Force) to develop a statewide approach to reducing falls among older adults by:
(1) Investigating and examining the immediate and long-term dangers of fall injuries on our senior population;

(2) Examining the fiscal impact of senior falls on our medical system and health care costs; and

(3) Recommending appropriate interventions and prevention programs to reduce falls and health care costs associated with falls;

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force consist of five members appointed by the Governor, five members appointed by the President of the Senate, five members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and six additional members, who are leaders in their industry or directors of their departments, or their designees, and who shall collaborate with and support the work of the Task Force as requested. These additional six members are to include:

(1) The Medical Director or Corporate Executive Officer of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation;

(2) The Dean of Geriatric Medicine of the John A. Burns School of Medicine;

(3) A representative of the Fall Prevention Consortium;

(4) The Director of Health or the Director's designee;

(5) The Director of the Executive Office on Aging or the Director's designee; and

(6) The Director of the Elderly Affairs Division of the City and County of Honolulu or the Director's designee;

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the Task Force have a background in elderly services, geriatric medicine, geriatric pharmacology, business, insurance, health care, long-term care, hospital administration, risk management, or public policy development, or be an advocate for or consumer of elderly care services; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the Task Force:

(1) Be appointed as soon as practicable, but no later than July 1, 2010;

(2) Are requested to convene before August 15, 2010, whether or not all membership appointments have been made at that time; and

(3) Are requested to convene at a place chosen by the convener;

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, if the Task Force is unable to fill any vacancies to which it is entitled, the Task Force may fill any vacancies that may exist as of August 15, 2010; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of the Executive Office on Aging is designated as the chair of the Task Force; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health and Executive Office on Aging is requested to provide administrative support; and the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to assist the Task Force in drafting any legislation resulting from the Task Force; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as part of its review, the Task Force is requested to:

(1) Investigate the most effective means to enhance public awareness that falls are preventable;

(2) Review the potential for increasing the availability and accessibility of fall prevention programs statewide for caregivers and the elderly on how to prevent falls and effectively use community resources; and

(3) Investigate the best way to expand the role of medical and health care professionals in screening, educating, and referring elderly persons to fall prevention programs;
and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to collaborate with interested stakeholders, including health care facilities, community coalitions, government agencies, and organizations concerned with protecting kupuna and preventing falls; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force submit an interim report to the Legislature no later than 20 days before the convening of the Regular Session of 2011, describing the progress made in the review of fall prevention data and impact of senior falls on the State's medical system and health care costs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force submit a final report, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2012; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Medical Director of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, Dean of Geriatric Medicine of the John A. Burns School of Medicine, Fall Prevention Consortium, Director of Health, Director of the Executive Office on Aging, Director of the University of Hawaii Center on Aging, and Director of the Elderly Affairs Division of the City and County of Honolulu.