HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING AND RECOGNIZING YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII FOR WINNING THE 2008 AND 2009 BRAVE NEW VOICES INTERNATIONAL YOUTH POETRY SPOKEN WORD COMPETITIONS AND FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE YOUTH OF HAWAII.

WHEREAS, Youth Speaks is a national non-profit organization which started in San Francisco in 1996, dedicated towards building the next generation of leaders through both written and spoken word poetry; and

WHEREAS, founded in 2005, YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII is the leading presenter of spoken word performance, education, and youth poetry in the state; and

WHEREAS, YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII's mission is to empower the next generation of leaders, self-defined artists, and visionary activists through written and oral literacy, and is a multi-faceted organization that understands and believes that the power, insight, creativity, and passion of young artists can change the world; and

WHEREAS, YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII facilitates safe spaces within and outside public institutions where youth aged 14-18 can critically analyze, write, and voice their own experiences through the powerful artistic medium of spoken word to their peers; and

WHEREAS, YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII offers needed and often unfunded literary arts education programs during the school day and after school hours, and conducts annual publications and youth development programs, involving young poets from over 26 schools across the state; and
WHEREAS, since 2005, YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII has run a free weekly youth poetry workshop in Honolulu's Chinatown Arts District every Wednesday during the school year; and

WHEREAS, YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII has sent a team to the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry spoken word competitions since 2005, which takes place in a different city over 5 days and involves over 500 poets from around the world; and

WHEREAS, the YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII team primarily mentored by Lyz Soto, Travis Thompson, Tui Scanlon, and Darren Cambra, consisting of Alaka'i Kotrys, Ittai Wong, Jamaica Osorio, Jocelyn Ng, and William Giles won the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry spoken word competition in 2008, and the team consisting of Alaka'i Kotrys, Ittai Wong, Jamaica Osorio, Jocelyn Ng, Harrison Ines, and Jill Fukumoto won the competition in 2009; and

WHEREAS, YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII poets have performed at venues across the state and the nation, including the Kennedy Center, the Lincoln Theatre in Washington DC, and the Chicago Theatre, as well as a performance titled "Kumolipo" by poet Jamaica Osorio before nationally recognized artists, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama; and

WHEREAS, YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII has succeeded in shifting perceptions of youth by combating illiteracy, alienation, and silence amongst participants, and helped bring their important voices from the margins of our culture to the core, 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 this body hereby recognizes and congratulates YOUTH SPEAKS HAWAII for winning the 2008 and 2009 Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Competitions, and for their outstanding achievements as representatives of the Youth of
Hawaii, commends them on their high level of commitment, and extends its warmest aloha and best wishes for continued success in all future endeavors.