HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE RATIFICATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

WHEREAS, according to the United Nations (UN), in most countries, at least one person in ten is disabled by physical, mental, or sensory impairment, and a quarter of the global population is directly affected by disability, as caregivers or family members; and

WHEREAS, as of 2007, 12.8 percent of the nation's adult population between the ages of 21 and 64 reported having a disability; and

WHEREAS, in Hawaii, those reporting having a disability comprise 10.7 percent of that age group; and

WHEREAS, persons with disabilities face many difficulties, and are often among the poorest and most neglected citizens of our society; and

WHEREAS, the community has a responsibility to this targeted segment of the population; and

WHEREAS, recognizing his work to improve the lives of the individuals with disabilities and his inspiration to people "all over the world about what can be achieved despite any physical limitations" as explained by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the UN recently appointed American Grammy Award-winning singer Stevie Wonder a UN "messenger of peace" - a title given to individuals carefully selected from the fields of film, music, literature, and sports who promote UN activities and ideals through public appearances and media contacts -- with a special focus on people with disabilities; and
WHEREAS, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Convention), the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century, entered into force in 2008 with the purpose to "promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity;" and

WHEREAS, the Convention takes to new heights the movement away from viewing persons with disabilities as objects of charity, medical treatment, and social protection, to viewing them as individuals with rights who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society; and

WHEREAS, the Convention clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas in which adaptations must be made for them to effectively exercise their rights, areas in which their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced; and

WHEREAS, on its opening day, there were 82 signatories to the Convention, the highest number of signatories in history to a UN Convention on its opening day; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has signed the Convention and submitted it to the United States Senate for its advice and consent for ratification; and

WHEREAS, the ratification of the Convention would serve to remind us -- as policymakers, public officials, service providers, friends, or family -- of our social and moral responsibility to persons with disabilities, and also serve as the guiding principles to improve their lives; 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 urges the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the members of Hawaii's Congressional delegation, Governor, Director of Health, and Director of Human Services.