WHEREAS, the United States has more income and wealth inequality than any major developed country, according to a 2015 University of California at Berkeley study; and

WHEREAS, Americans with incomes in the top 1 percent averaged more than forty times more income than those with incomes in the bottom 90 percent, according to the 2015 study; and

WHEREAS, wealthy Americans in the top 1 percent collectively hold 38.6 percent of the nation's wealth, while those in the bottom 90 percent collectively hold only 22.8 percent, according to a 2016 Pew Research Center analysis of Federal Reserve data; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii's minimum wage is $10.10, but the living wage for a single adult working full-time in Honolulu is $16.03, and the living wage for an adult with a dependent child is $28.11, according to data from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and

WHEREAS, due to the large disparity between the current minimum wage and a living wage, many individuals work two or more jobs to maintain a basic standard of living for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, while the United States posted strong employment gains early in 2018, more than two hundred thousand Americans still filed for unemployment benefits in late February 2018; and

WHEREAS, in addition to having negative effects on communities and the economy, unemployment is associated with, among other things, increased rates of physical and mental
illness, alcohol and drug abuse, failed relationships, and other personal and social challenges; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that a public sector option to provide jobs to support efforts to reduce unemployment and remove barriers to better paying work for all Americans merits consideration by Congress; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature believes that a public sector option will also help address underemployment, which is part-time work by individuals who would prefer to work full-time, and discouraged workers, which are individuals who want a job but have stopped looking because they do not believe work is available; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the United States to address the nation's income and wealth inequality so that all Americans may enjoy a quality life and have financial security; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018, that Congress is urged to explore the feasibility of establishing a federal living wage jobs-for-all program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the President Pro Tempore, Majority Leader, and Minority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker, Majority Leader, and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, and Hawaii's congressional delegation.

OFFERED BY: 

MAR 09 2018