WHEREAS, on February 14, 2018, a mass shooting took place in Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL; and

WHEREAS, police said the gunman used an AR-15 rifle to kill seventeen people in one of the deadliest school mass shootings in the nation's history; and

WHEREAS, the AR-15 rifle, a civilian version of the military's M-16, has often been used in American mass shootings; and

WHEREAS, in the past thirty-five years, the AR-15 rifle has been used in thirteen mass shootings, including eight since March 2015, according to the Stanford Geospatial Center and Stanford Libraries and USA TODAY; and

WHEREAS, the importation of foreign-manufactured assault weapons, including those substantially similar to the AR-15 rifle, was banned in 1989 by then-President George H.W. Bush and the domestic manufacture, transfer, and possession of semiautomatic assault weapons, including AR-15 rifles, and high-capacity magazines were prohibited by the federal Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Act of 1994, also known as the Federal Assault Weapons Ban; and

WHEREAS, although it withstood numerous constitutional challenges, the Federal Assault Weapons Ban expired in 2004 when Congress failed to act to reauthorize it; and

WHEREAS, since the expiration of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban in 2004, the National Rifle Association has called
the AR-15 rifle the "most popular rifle in America" and estimated that Americans own more than eight million AR-15 rifles; and

WHEREAS, these weapons are popular with a certain segment of gun owners because they are adaptable, reliable, and accurate, and can be customized with after-market accessories to greatly increase magazine capacity, fire more rapidly, and perform almost identically to the military version of the weapon; and

WHEREAS, while there is no clear definition of "assault weapon" in current federal law, the United States Department of Justice in 1994 said that assault weapons generally are semiautomatic firearms with a large magazine of ammunition that were designed and configured for rapid fire and combat use; and

WHEREAS, the AR-15 rifle was considered an assault weapon under the United States Department of Justice's 1994 definition in accordance with the Federal Assault Weapons Ban; and

WHEREAS, assault weapons such as the AR-15 have practically no utility for hunting, recreational marksmanship, or other reasonable purposes, but are rather designed to cause the greatest possible injury to the greatest number of people, particularly when customized with readily-available accessories such as large-capacity magazines, rapid firing mechanisms, and laser scopes; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement has been united in support of banning assault weapons as they are of particular danger and concern to both civilians and law enforcement personnel; and

WHEREAS, assault weapons no longer serve their primary military function in the hands of civilians and their extreme danger to the public and lack of legitimate functionality place ownership of assault weapons far beyond the intent of the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to the public safety of the United States to reinstate the ban on the manufacture, transfer, and
possession of assault weapons, including the AR-15 rifle, and
other weapons designed for military use and made available for
sale on the open market; 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 the United States Congress is urged to reinstate
and strengthen the ban on the manufacture, transfer, and
possession of assault weapons, including the AR-15 rifle, and
other civilian weapons that were designed for military use and
later made available for sale to the civilian market; 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, Hawaii's congressional
delegation, and the respective Governors and presiding officers
of the legislative bodies of each of the other forty-nine
states.

OFFERED BY:  

MAR - 2 2018