WHEREAS, forty-two percent of employees in the State's private sector lack access to a single day of paid leave while those most in need of financial support from paid leave, low wage workers, are least likely to have access to family leave; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii has one of the highest costs of living, the highest percentage of multi-generational households, and fastest growing population of individuals aged sixty-five and older in the United States; and

WHEREAS, almost every worker in Hawaii will face the demands of caring for a newborn, sick children, and a spouse or loved one who has developed a serious health condition at some point in their life; and

WHEREAS, the United States is the only highly developed nation that does not mandate any paid family leave for all workers, and the average paid leave mandated by these other nations is eighteen weeks; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 allows twelve weeks of unpaid leave to employees, but only those who have worked at a business that employs fifty or more employees; and

WHEREAS, existing state law offers a modest four-week extension of unpaid leave that is available only to employees of large employers having more than one hundred employees, which fails to cover forty percent of the State's workforce; and

WHEREAS, a lack of access to paid family leave has profound consequences for our working families; financially vulnerable
parents and caregivers are forced to choose between their livelihood or the well-being of a loved one; and

WHEREAS, two-thirds of children live in households where both parents work, and a quarter live in households headed by a single parent, leaving no full-time caregiver at home; and

WHEREAS, a 2015 AARP Public Policy Institute study found that 154,000 adults in Hawaii have provided unpaid care to an adult loved one with caregiving hours estimated at 144 million, which translates to $2,100,000 in costs; and

WHEREAS, women, as primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are affected disproportionately by the lack of paid family leave; and

WHEREAS, analysis of a report provided in 2018 by the National Women's Law Center estimated that the motherhood wage gap or "motherhood penalty" equates to a loss of $16,000 a year; and

WHEREAS, paid family leave often results in benefits for employers, employees, families and the economy, such as:

(1) Increased health outcomes for children and mothers;

(2) Increased bonding between parents and children;

(3) Increased elderly individuals being able to age in place with family caregiver support;

(4) Increased employee retention;

(5) Increased employee productivity and engagement;

(6) Increased physical wellness;

(7) Increased gender equity in the workplace; and

(8) Decreased dependence on public assistance; and
WHEREAS, eight states and the District of Columbia have adopted a state-level paid family leave program that operates under a social insurance system, with employees and/or employers across the state paying into a dedicated insurance fund; and several other states and municipalities are considering adopting a paid family leave program; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive feasibility and implementation study, the "Paid Family Leave Grant Analysis Report", was published in November 2017; and within six months the Legislature directed the Legislative Reference Bureau to conduct a sunrise analysis to lay the groundwork for the establishment of a Hawaii paid family leave framework that would enable employees to access leave benefits to care for family members; and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Reference Bureau published the "Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study" on November 13, 2019; and

WHEREAS, both studies concluded that although states have enacted laws to expand unpaid and job-protection leave, it is not a realistic option in the event of a new biological, foster or adopted child, aging parent, or ailing loved one, and that sustainably-funded paid family leave is needed and affordable; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, the Senate concurring, that the State is respectfully requested to establish and recognize a goal to adopt and implement a paid family leave program for all workers by 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Director
of the Department of Human Services, and Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

OFFERED BY:  

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