A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO KALAUPAPA MONTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that January is a significant month in the history of Kalaupapa on the island of Moloka'i.

In 1865, Hawai'i passed "An Act to Prevent the Spread of Leprosy", which required the isolation of leprosy patients. Accordingly, for that purpose, the State bought eight hundred acres of land on the Kalaupapa peninsula of Moloka'i. On January 6, 1866, twelve citizens of Hawai'i arrived at Kalaupapa, the first of an estimated eight thousand people who were taken from their families and forced into isolation.

The government provided very little support or supplies to the early settlement of isolated leprosy patients. When the first ships arrived in 1866, the original inhabitants of Kalaupapa played a critical role in helping these leprosy patients. If not for their kindness and compassion, life would have been far worse for those who were forced into isolation.

As the settlement grew and became overcrowded, the government
ordered the original inhabitants to leave the land they had
occupied for generations. The last of the original inhabitants
of Kalaupapa were evicted in January 1895, a year after the
Republic of Hawai‘i was established.

The legislature further finds that Hale Mohalu, a
collection of World War II barracks on eleven acres of land at
the edge of Pearl City, Oahu, was converted into a treatment
center for leprosy patients registered at Kalaupapa and became a
"second home" for many of its patients. Since the 1950s, state
officials had let Hale Mohalu fall into disrepair, and in 1978,
the State began relocating patients to Leahi Hospital, its
designated Honolulu treatment center. On January 26, 1978,
eight residents of Hale Mohalu were relocated to Leahi Hospital
against their wishes. Twelve others refused to leave and
remained behind, including Bernard Punikai‘a, Clarence Naia, and
Frank and Mary Duarte. This began a nearly six-year occupation
of Hale Mohalu by these residents, who together with their
supporters, protested policies imposed by the then-Governor and
the board of health. Punikai‘a, Naia, and several of their
supporters were arrested on September 21, 1983, when the
buildings of Hale Mohalu were bulldozed.
The legislature additionally finds that two key individuals who committed their lives to serving those affected by leprosy also share significant dates in the month of January.

On January 3, 1840, Jozef De Veuster was born in Belgium. He later joined the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Known as Father Damien, he was ordained in Honolulu. Father Damien arrived at Kalaupapa in 1873 and spent sixteen years of his life caring for the people of Kalaupapa, ministering to them, building houses, churches, and tending to their medical needs. He was canonized as Saint Damien of Moloka'i in 2009.

On January 23, 1838, Barbara Koob was born in Germany. She later became a member of The Sisters of St. Francis of Syracuse, New York, and eventually became known as Mother Marianne Cope. She was a respected health administrator and answered the call of King Kalākaua and Queen Kapiʻolani to help people affected by leprosy in Hawai‘i. She spent thirty years at Kalaupapa, supervising the Bishop Home for Single Women and Girls and serving as a leader in the community. She was canonized as Saint Marianne in 2012.
Many of the people sent to Kalaupapa also became great leaders of the community. On January 5, 1879, Ambrose Hutchison arrived at Kalaupapa where he lived for the next fifty-three years. He served as resident superintendent for a total of ten years, the longest of any other person facing the challenges of leprosy.

The legislature further finds that since 2014, on the fourth Sunday of January, the Hawai‘i Conference of the United Church of Christ (HUCC) observes "Kalaupapa Sunday", wherein HUCC churches across Hawai‘i remember the people of Kalaupapa, particularly the thirty-five men and women who founded Siloama Church less than six months after the first leprosy patients were sent to Kalaupapa in 1866.

The legislature finds that the people of Kalaupapa today are viewed not only as valuable members of society, but as some of Hawaii’s finest citizens who have overcome the most difficult of circumstances. Mercy Hutchison Bacon, great niece of Kalaupapa leader Ambrose Hutchison, called the people of Kalaupapa "the pride of a nation."

Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to establish January as "Kalaupapa month" to serve as an annual reminder to people
all over Hawai'i about the importance of Kalaupapa and the
significant contributions made by its people throughout the
history of Hawai'i.

SECTION 2. Chapter 8, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
read as follows:

"§8- Kalaupapa month. The month of January shall be
known and designated as "Kalaupapa month". This month is not
and shall not be construed as a state holiday."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY:
Report Title:
Kalaupapa Month

Description:
Designates January as "Kalaupapa month."

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.