

MAR 12 2021

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REAFFIRMING A COMMITMENT TO ENDING SYSTEMIC RACISM AND INJUSTICE
IN HAWAII AND THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

1 WHEREAS, in September 1959, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
2 addressed the First Legislature of the State of Hawaii,
3 explaining, "segregation is still with us. We are confronted in
4 the South in its glaring and conspicuous forms and we are
5 confronted in almost every other section of the nation in its
6 hidden and subtle forms. While lynchings have ceased to a great
7 extent, other things are happening. Churches are being bombed
8 . . . we know that there are still conniving forces being used
9 to keep the Negro from being a registered voter."; and
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11 WHEREAS, in February 1964, a coalition of political,
12 business, and community leaders in Hawaii, including
13 congressional elected officials; labor unions such as the Hawaii
14 Government Employees Union, International Longshore and
15 Warehouse Union, and the AFL-CIO; the Chamber of Commerce and
16 local businesses; publishers of the major newspapers and
17 television news stations; Catholic, Buddhist, Jewish, and other
18 faiths; University of Hawaii; Hawaii Civil Rights Commission;
19 and with leadership from the local National Association for the
20 Advancement of Colored People, joined together; and
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22 WHEREAS, Hawaii's leaders jointly declared that, "Hawaii is
23 one of the few areas in the world where people of varied racial,
24 religious, and ethnic backgrounds have learned to live and work
25 together without serious friction," however, "detachment and
26 lack of involvement in the civil rights struggle is not a policy
27 that we of Hawaii should follow. It is our conviction that we
28 cannot assume that this crucial issue affecting our nation is
29 'not our problem.' . . . Hawaii has an obligation to bear
30 witness to the rest of the nation. We do this not out of a
31 sense of self-righteousness, but with deep humility, for we are
32 aware that race relations in Hawaii are not without need of
33 improvement."; and



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2 WHEREAS, Hawaii has a long and storied history among its
3 different peoples, beginning with the meeting of indigenous
4 Kanaka Maoli and European settlers, through the arrival of the
5 first Black people in the early 1800s, who worked as deckhands
6 on merchant and whaling ships, and to the immigration of
7 numerous races and ethnicities from countries around the Pacific
8 rim over the following century; and
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10 WHEREAS, despite the challenges of integration, Hawaii has
11 been a world leader striving to seek harmony and justice for all
12 races, adopting in its constitution a decade before the American
13 Civil War and Emancipation Proclamation a provision that,
14 "[s]lavery shall, under no circumstances whatsoever, be
15 tolerated in the Hawaiian Islands"; and
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17 WHEREAS, the long path toward building a peaceful and
18 integrated island society has seen minority communities endure
19 shared systemic oppression, but make progress together through a
20 shared fight for equal rights, justice, respect, and aloha for
21 all, including Black residents joining Kanaka Maoli in their
22 fight for liberation and protest against the annexation of the
23 Kingdom of Hawaii by the United States; and
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25 WHEREAS, in his address to Hawaii's First Legislature,
26 Dr. King explained, "we have come a long, long way but in order
27 to tell the truth, it is necessary to move on and say we have a
28 long, long way to go. If we stop here, we would be the victims
29 of a dangerous optimism. We would be the victims of an illusion
30 wrapped in superficiality."; and
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32 WHEREAS, Dr. King closed by challenging Hawaii's
33 Legislature, "Segregation debilitates the white man as well as
34 the Negro. We are to free all men, all races, and all groups.
35 This is our responsibility, and this is our challenge; and we
36 look to this great new state in our Union as the example and as
37 the inspiration."; and
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39 WHEREAS, thanks to generations of vigilance by our local
40 forbearers, today racial, ethnic, and religious communities in
41 Hawaii coexist more peacefully than in many other places, though
42 we are still far from perfect and racism persists toward the



1 Black, Micronesian, and Kanaka Maoli communities, among others,
2 and we must continue to address the effects of the hidden
3 skeleton of systemic injustice, which has been woven into laws,
4 institutions, and economic advancement since the overthrow of
5 the Hawaiian Kingdom; and

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7 WHEREAS, throughout the United States the Black community
8 and other minorities continue to fight overt and systemic racial
9 injustice and disenfranchisement, which continues to claim
10 lives, prosperity, and the potential of future generations, and
11 has manifested a renewed national movement to stand vigilant and
12 reaffirm this generation's commitment to ending racism and
13 injustice; and

14
15 WHEREAS, in 2020, a new wave of racism and prejudice toward
16 those of Asian descent erupted around the country, prompted by
17 unjust misconceptions related to the spread of the coronavirus
18 disease 2019 (COVID-19), which has renewed conversations about
19 racism toward all minorities across the country; and

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21 WHEREAS, if Hawaii is to live up to the challenge set forth
22 to the State's First Legislature by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;
23 if Hawaii is to live up to the commitment of our forbearers to
24 stand vigilant and bear witness to racism and injustice; and if
25 Hawaii is to live up to our local values of respect and aloha
26 for all, then today we cannot remain silent amidst racism and
27 injustice anywhere; now, therefore,

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29 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
30 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, the
31 House of Representatives concurring, that while significant
32 progress has been made, this body is urged to recognize that
33 overt and systemic racism and injustice continue to harm people
34 throughout the country; and

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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Hawaii cannot ignore ongoing
37 cases of racism and injustice locally, in particular against the
38 Micronesian and Kanaka Maoli communities in the islands that are
39 among the most affected; and

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41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate and the House of
42 Representatives of the Thirty-first Legislature, reaffirms the



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1 State's commitment to ending systemic racism and injustice in
2 Hawaii and throughout the United States, and calls on every
3 Hawaii government institution, business, and organization, as
4 well as the United States Congress and the President of the
5 United States, to lead by example and to take every available
6 action to achieve this attainable goal, for ourselves and for
7 future generations; and

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
10 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President of the
11 United States; Speaker of the United States House of
12 Representatives; Majority Leader of the United States Senate;
13 Governor; and Mayors of each county.

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OFFERED BY:



