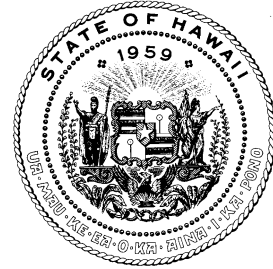


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**FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE**

July 17, 2012

**SENATOR MALAMA SOLOMON ATTENDS 2012 FOLKMOOT USA, NORTH CAROLINA'S OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

**The Beamer Solomon Halau O Po'ohala** -- a traditional Hawaiian hula school from Waimea, Island of Hawai'i -- has been selected to represent the United States at the 2012 **Folkmoot USA, North Carolina's Official International Festival**.

The Halau is under the direction of 5th generation Loea (dance master) and Kumu Hula Hulali Solomon Covington.

The Festival is a two-week celebration of the world's cultural heritage through folk music and dance from July 20 to 29, 2012.

Dancers and musicians in colorful traditional costumes come from the countries of New Zealand, France, Belgium, Indonesia, Peru, Philippines, Serbia, Puerto Rico, Ukraine and Hawaii, USA will share their cultural traditions, practices and protocols with people from literally around the world in over 70 performances.

The Festival first took place in 1984, the same year as North Carolina's 400th birthday celebration, featuring performers from England, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Turkey, Mexico, Puerto Rico and India. These world ambassadors travel to North Carolina for entertainment, cultural exchange and education; their intent is to share cultural traditions with the broadest audiences, partly to ensure these traditions are not lost in our fast-paced modern world.

Now, 28 years later, more than 200 groups from 100 different countries have attended the Festival. The Festival's policy is that an entirely new program of performers is offered each year. Hundreds of groups apply to perform each year, but only 10 to 12 are chosen.

Governor Neil Abercrombie and the Hawai'i State Senate have recognized the accomplishments of Beamer Solomon Halau O Po'ohala and whole heartedly support this world cultural heritage Festival through folk music and dance in Waynsville, North Carolina. The Governor has asked Senator Malama Solomon, cultural advisor to the Halau, to represent the State of Hawai'i at the Festival and present a Proclamation congratulating and commending the organizers of the Festival. Senator Solomon will also present a congratulatory Certificate from the Hawai'i State Senate to the Festival organizers.

END