

MAR 13 2008

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE PEOPLE OF KALAUPAPA AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR THEIR SACRIFICES, AND APOLOGIZING TO THE PEOPLE OF KALAUPAPA AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR ANY HARSH RESTRICTIONS THAT CAUSED THEM UNDUE PAIN AS THE RESULT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES SURROUNDING LEPROSY.

1 WHEREAS, from 1866 to 1969, an estimated 8,000 citizens of
2 Hawai'i were forced to leave their families and to be isolated,
3 most often on the Kalaupapa peninsula, because of society's fear
4 of leprosy (also known as Hansen's disease); and

5
6 WHEREAS, these individuals were mothers and fathers, sons
7 and daughters, brothers and sisters who were separated at all
8 ages, from very young to very old; and

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10 WHEREAS, for many of these residents, the separation was
11 permanent, yet, because they felt they were protecting the
12 general public from a disease that was not curable until the
13 1940s, most people diagnosed with leprosy willingly made this
14 greatest of sacrifices; and

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16 WHEREAS, these sacrifices were made because these heroic
17 individuals did not want anyone else to experience this disease,
18 which was not only physically painful, but also emotionally
19 difficult to bear; and

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21 WHEREAS, despite being exiled by their own government and
22 suffering great deprivations and injustices throughout much of
23 their lives, the people of Kalaupapa have been remarkably
24 resilient and have responded to their situations with kindness,
25 generosity, and forgiveness rather than anger, bitterness, and
26 despair; and

27
28 WHEREAS, the families of those sent to Kalaupapa also
29 suffered unimaginable pain; and
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1 WHEREAS, fathers and mothers were forced to take their
2 unsuspecting children diagnosed with leprosy to a designated
3 facility and leave them there, resulting in farewells of agony
4 and sorrow; and
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6 WHEREAS, those same parents would later watch from the
7 docks as their children were loaded onto the ships destined for
8 Kalaupapa, possibly the last time they would see one another;
9 and
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11 WHEREAS, children born to the people of Kalaupapa were
12 immediately taken away at birth and grew up with other relatives
13 or in orphanages, and, if they were fortunate, would eventually
14 get to know their parents, but not until they were nearly adults
15 or older; and
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17 WHEREAS, relationships between parents and children could
18 be difficult to establish and maintain because of the forced
19 separation; and
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21 WHEREAS, the Kalaupapa residents and their families have
22 mostly accepted their circumstances throughout the years and put
23 their lives back together as best they could; and
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25 WHEREAS, even after the medicine to control leprosy was
26 introduced in 1946, the government was still slow to end the
27 isolation laws which were not abolished until 1969, allowing
28 anyone diagnosed with leprosy to be treated at home with no fear
29 of separation; and
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31 WHEREAS, there has never been an official acknowledgement
32 to the people of Kalaupapa for all that they did and the
33 exemplary manner in how they have lived their lives; now,
34 therefore,
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36 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth
37 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the
38 House of Representatives concurring, that the Legislature
39 recognizes and acknowledges the people of Kalaupapa and their
40 families for their sacrifices, for thinking more of the public
41 than of themselves, for giving up freedoms and opportunities the
42 rest of society takes for granted, for rebuilding their lives
43 with pride and dignity, for overcoming prejudice and



1 discrimination, and for consistently reaching out to others in
2 need; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature, on behalf of
5 past governments of Hawai'i, apologizes to the people of
6 Kalaupapa and their families for any harsh restrictions that
7 caused them undue pain as the result of government policies
8 surrounding leprosy; and

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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this overdue action be issued
11 with the utmost respect and admiration for those remaining
12 Kalaupapa residents, the descendents of those who have died and
13 family members who all have endured separation from loved ones
14 and the anguish that came with it; and with the hope that such
15 severe measures of separation and injustice are never imposed
16 upon people with a disease ever again; and

17
18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
19 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to all the residents of
20 Kalaupapa, Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, the Governor, the Director of
21 Health, and the Superintendent of Kalaupapa National Historical
22 Park.

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OFFERED BY:

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