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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING, ACKNOWLEDGING, AND EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO THE PEOPLE OF KALAUPAPA AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR THEIR GREAT SACRIFICES AND HARDSHIPS AS A RESULT OF THEIR FORCED ISOLATION, WHICH AT THE TIME WAS BELIEVED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH, AND APOLOGIZING TO THE PEOPLE OF KALAUPAPA AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR ANY HARSH RESTRICTIONS THAT CAUSED THEM UNDUE PAIN AS THE RESULT OF FORMER 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  
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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  
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1           WHEREAS, the families of those sent to Kalaupapa also  
2 suffered unimaginable pain; and

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4           WHEREAS, fathers and mothers were forced to take their  
5 unsuspecting children diagnosed with leprosy to a designated  
6 facility and leave them there, resulting in farewells of agony  
7 and sorrow; and

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9           WHEREAS, those same parents would later watch from the  
10 docks as their children were loaded onto the ships destined for  
11 Kalaupapa, possibly the last time they would see one another;  
12 and

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14           WHEREAS, children born to the people of Kalaupapa were  
15 immediately taken away at birth and grew up with other relatives  
16 or in orphanages, and, if they were fortunate, would eventually  
17 get to know their parents, but not until they were nearly adults  
18 or older; and

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20           WHEREAS, relationships between parents and children could  
21 be difficult to establish and maintain because of the forced  
22 separation; and

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24           WHEREAS, the Kalaupapa residents and their families have  
25 mostly accepted their circumstances throughout the years and put  
26 their lives back together as best they could; and

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28           WHEREAS, the government has maintained Kalaupapa for the  
29 last remaining residents as long as they choose to remain there,  
30 and provides for their medical, food, and housing needs; and

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32           WHEREAS, there has never been an official acknowledgement  
33 to the people of Kalaupapa for all that they did and the  
34 exemplary manner in how they have lived their lives; now,  
35 therefore,

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37           BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth  
38 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the  
39 House of Representatives concurring, that the Legislature  
40 recognizes, acknowledges, and expresses gratitude to the people  
41 of Kalaupapa and their families for their sacrifices, for  
42 thinking more of the public than of themselves, for giving up  
43 freedoms and opportunities the rest of society takes for  
44 granted, for rebuilding their lives with pride and dignity, for



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

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that while with the adoption of this  
5 measure, the Legislature does not confer any legal cause of  
6 action or any legal rights, remedies, relief, restitution, or  
7 reparations on any person, it nonetheless apologizes for the  
8 past actions against, and treatment of, past and current  
9 residents of Kalaupapa; and

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this overdue action be issued  
12 with the utmost respect and admiration for those remaining  
13 Kalaupapa residents, the descendents of those who have died and  
14 family members who all have endured separation from loved ones  
15 and the anguish that came with it, with the hope that if any  
16 quarantine or isolation is necessary in the future to protect  
17 public health and safety, it will be used only with appropriate  
18 safeguards to protect every individual's dignity and rights; and

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

