

MAR 13 2008

SENATE 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

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28 WHEREAS, the families of those sent to Kalaupapa also
29 suffered unimaginable pain; and

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31 WHEREAS, fathers and mothers were forced to take their
32 unsuspecting children diagnosed with leprosy to a designated



1 facility and leave them there, resulting in farewells of agony
2 and sorrow; and

3
4 WHEREAS, those same parents would later watch from the
5 docks as their children were loaded onto the ships destined for
6 Kalaupapa, possibly the last time they would see one another;
7 and

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

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15 WHEREAS, relationships between parents and children could
16 be difficult to establish and maintain because of the forced
17 separation; and

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19 WHEREAS, the Kalaupapa residents and their families have
20 mostly accepted their circumstances throughout the years and put
21 their lives back together as best they could; and

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23 WHEREAS, even after the medicine to control leprosy was
24 introduced in 1946, the government was still slow to end the
25 isolation laws which were not abolished until 1969, allowing
26 anyone diagnosed with leprosy to be treated at home with no fear
27 of separation; and

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

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34 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth
35 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008,
36 that the Legislature recognizes and acknowledges the people of
37 Kalaupapa and their families for their sacrifices, for thinking
38 more of the public than of themselves, for giving up freedoms
39 and opportunities the rest of society takes for granted, for
40 rebuilding their lives with pride and dignity, for overcoming
41 prejudice and discrimination, and for consistently reaching out
42 to others in need; and

43



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

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

14
 15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 16 Resolution be transmitted to all the residents of Kalaupapa, Ka
 17 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, the Governor, the Director of Health, and the
 18 Superintendent of Kalaupapa National Historical Park.

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OFFERED BY:

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