
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELAND SECURITY, AND THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL
TO EASE VISA RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
CHINA.

1 WHEREAS, China and the people of China have been a part of
2 the economy and culture of Hawaii since the first Chinese sugar
3 plantation laborers arrived in the islands in 1852; and
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5 WHEREAS, the first 175 laborers were from Hong Kong bound
6 for Maui--most of them from depression-torn Guangdong and Fujian
7 in southern China; and
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9 WHEREAS, from 1852 to 1876, nearly 4,000 Chinese laborers
10 migrated to Hawaii and by 1882, these *huaqiao* or migrants, made
11 up almost 49 percent of plantation labor, outnumbering
12 Caucasians in the islands; and
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14 WHEREAS, the progeny of these humble but determined Chinese
15 immigrants rose quickly through the ranks of Hawaii's
16 educational, political, and business communities, and have left
17 lasting impacts on Hawaii and even the world, the most famous of
18 whom, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, is referred to as "The Forerunner of the
19 Revolution"; and
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21 WHEREAS, Dr. Sun Yat-sen's education at Iolani School and
22 Oahu College inspired him to develop the vision of an educated,
23 strong, and democratic modern-day China that he would dedicate
24 the rest of his life to building, and would later prompt him to
25 say that Hawaii was where he "came to know what modern,
26 civilized governments are like and what they mean"; and
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28 WHEREAS, Dr. Sun Yat-sen established the first Chinese
29 revolutionary party, called *Xing Zhong Hui* or Revive China
30 Society, and returned to Hawaii five more times, and during



1 those trips, many Hawaii families contributed financially to his
2 cause; and

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4 WHEREAS, the Counties of Hawaii Sister-Cities Summit held
5 in Honolulu from September 13, 2011, to September 15, 2011,
6 highlighted the inextricable and historic ties between China and
7 Hawaii with a particular emphasis on strengthening our
8 relationships with Honolulu's sister cities of Zhongshan,
9 Haikou, Qinhuangdao, and Chengdu; and

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11 WHEREAS, the summit demonstrated that China will continue
12 to embrace our open-door policy and fortified our understanding
13 of each other's needs in the areas of cultural exchange,
14 economic development, trade, tourism, and education; and

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16 WHEREAS, recently, members of Hawaii's business and
17 government communities welcomed 271 passengers at Honolulu
18 International Airport aboard China Eastern Airlines' inaugural
19 direct flight from Shanghai, heralding a new era for Honolulu's
20 economic growth and forging closer ties between the United
21 States and China; and

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23 WHEREAS, the People's Republic of China, with its
24 population of 1,300,000,000, represents a very large and
25 lucrative pool of visitors, because the average Chinese tourist
26 to Hawaii is expected to spend about \$368 per day, compared to
27 \$275 daily for the average Japanese tourist and just \$178 per
28 day, on average, for all tourists to Hawaii; and

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30 WHEREAS, tourism dollars have been identified by the United
31 States Department of Commerce as an export, and President Barack
32 Obama's National Export Initiative of May 2010 seeks to double
33 United States exports by 2015; and

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35 WHEREAS, China has transformed itself from an impoverished
36 country to the world's second-largest economy, and as it grows,
37 continues to have an impact on Hawaii and the globe; and

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39 WHEREAS, China is now a major trade partner with the United
40 States and a force for stability and peace in Asia, and has
41 become a world leader in the automobile market and the world's
42 largest producer of energy; and



1 WHEREAS, in spite of the reciprocity between China and
2 Hawaii, the visa application and approval process for Chinese
3 business and tourist travelers is an arduous and often lengthy
4 process that deters many potential visitors to Hawaii and the
5 United States; and

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7 WHEREAS, a Chinese citizen who wishes to visit the United
8 States must appear in person before a United States consular
9 official to obtain the visa, but there are only five United
10 States consulates in the entire People's Republic of China; and

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12 WHEREAS, due to the small number of consulates and staff to
13 handle the in-person interviews necessary for entry visas, the
14 average wait times for those interviews in China far exceed wait
15 times in other countries; and

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17 WHEREAS, one solution to ease this problem is for a country
18 to be admitted to the United States State Department's Visa
19 Waiver Program, which allows nationals from foreign countries to
20 enter the United States for tourism- or business-related
21 purposes for as long as 90 days without obtaining a visa; and

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23 WHEREAS, both the citizens of Japan and South Korea qualify
24 for visa waivers; and

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26 WHEREAS, when South Korea became one of the 36 countries in
27 the United States State Department's Visa Waiver Program in
28 November 2008, it boosted tourism to Hawaii from that country;
29 and

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31 WHEREAS, in order for a country to qualify to participate
32 in the Visa Waiver Program, the country must satisfy certain
33 conditions, with the United States government retaining the
34 ultimate discretion to admit the country to the program; and

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36 WHEREAS, one condition for entry into the waiver program is
37 the rate of refusal of a country's visa applicants, which must
38 be three percent or lower; and

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40 WHEREAS, the refusal rate for Chinese visa applicants was
41 13.3 percent as of 2010; and

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43 WHEREAS, the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, a newly
44 created industry group appointed by the United States Secretary



1 of Commerce, recommended measures that can be taken to increase
2 travel to the United States from China, which include:

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- 4 (1) Raising the permissible visa-refusal rate from three
5 to ten percent;
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 - 7 (2) Establishing a maximum wait time of five days for
8 in-person visa interviews;
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 - 10 (3) Adding four to six visa-processing locations and
11 several hundred consular officers to process visas;
12 and
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 - 14 (4) Allowing non-immigrant visas to be valid for ten years
15 for Chinese visitors, which is permitted in other
16 countries; now, therefore,
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18 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
19 Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
20 Session of 2013, the Senate concurring, that it urges the United
21 States Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security,
22 and the United States Attorney General to include the People's
23 Republic of China in the Visa Waiver Program and support the
24 recommendations of the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board to ease
25 visa restrictions and the visa application and approval process
26 for business and tourist travelers from the People's Republic of
27 China; and

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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
30 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the United States
31 Secretary of State; United States Secretary of Homeland
32 Security; United States Attorney General; United States Acting
33 Secretary of Commerce; China's Ambassador to the United States;
34 members of Hawaii's Congressional delegation; President and
35 Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Tourism Authority;
36 Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism;
37 Executive Director of the Asian American Institute; Executive
38 Director of the OCA; President of the Hawaii State Association
39 of Counties; and Mayors of the Counties of Kauai, Hawaii,
40 Honolulu, and Maui.

