
SENATE RESOLUTION

COMMEMORATING AND HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT WILLIAM
KALANIHIAPO WILCOX, AN ENDURING PATRIOT AND ADVOCATE FOR
THE RIGHTS OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS, WHO SERVED AS HAWAII'S
FIRST ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS.

1 WHEREAS, Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilcox was born on
2 February 15, 1855, on the island of Maui to Captain William
3 Slocum Wilcox, a native of Newport, Rhode Island, and Kalua of
4 Maui, whose parents were both born of chiefly ancestors on
5 Hawaii and Maui; and
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7 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox attended Haleakala Boarding School in
8 Makawao, Maui, taught school on Maui, and was elected to the
9 Royal Legislature in 1880 to serve the citizens of Wailuku and
10 its neighboring Maui towns; and
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12 WHEREAS, in 1881, King Kalakaua selected Mr. Wilcox to
13 study at the Royal Military Academy in Italy where he excelled
14 and was selected by Italian officers to attend the Royal
15 Application School for Engineer and Artillery Officers where he
16 remained until the end of 1887; and
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18 WHEREAS, in 1887, just prior to Mr. Wilcox's return to
19 Hawaii, the Reform Party of Hawaii, in concert with the Honolulu
20 Rifles militia unit, imposed the Bayonet Constitution on King
21 Kalakaua; and
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23 WHEREAS, the Bayonet Constitution limited the powers of the
24 monarchy and imposed income and property ownership requirements
25 for voting, which allowed wealthy Europeans and Americans to
26 vote even though they were not citizens of the Kingdom of
27 Hawaii, but disenfranchised many Native Hawaiians; and
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29 WHEREAS, upon Mr. Wilcox's return to Hawaii in late 1887,
30 he organized against the Reform Party of Hawaii; and
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1 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox continued to advocate revocation of the
2 Bayonet Constitution of 1887, and in 1889 was confronted by the
3 Honolulu Rifles, who engaged Mr. Wilcox and those in his party
4 in an armed battle; and
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6 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox eventually surrendered to the Honolulu
7 Rifles and was charged with treason, but he was acquitted by a
8 jury to the acclaim and approval of many Native Hawaiians; and
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10 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox helped establish the National Reform
11 Party, which advocated restoring power to the monarchy and to
12 Native Hawaiian citizens; and
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14 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox ran for and was elected to the Royal
15 Legislature, where he served from 1890 through 1894 from the
16 island of Oahu; and
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18 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox founded a newspaper in 1892 called "The
19 Liberal", which advocated positions on behalf of Native Hawaiian
20 citizens in favor of adopting good government policies and
21 protecting the Hawaiian Kingdom from commercial and political
22 exploitation by foreign powers; and
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24 WHEREAS, Queen Liliuokalani, having succeeded to the
25 leadership of the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1891 after the untimely
26 death of her brother King Kalakaua, and realizing that the
27 Bayonet Constitution placed too much power in the hands of
28 westerners, limited the powers of the monarchy, and
29 disenfranchised Native Hawaiians, attempted on January 14, 1893,
30 to address the concern of foreign political power by revoking
31 the Bayonet Constitution and issuing a new constitution that
32 would restore power to the monarchy and limit the influence of
33 foreigners; and
34

35 WHEREAS, Queen Liliuokalani, realizing that her authority
36 and power as the reigning monarch of the Kingdom of Hawaii were
37 in jeopardy from American and European business interests who
38 were plotting against her plan to adopt a new constitution,
39 recruited Mr. Wilcox to command the field artillery unit of the
40 Royal Guard to defend the Queen and the Kingdom of Hawaii from
41 the influence and control of foreign interests; and
42



1 WHEREAS, on January 16, 1893, John L. Stevens, United
2 States Minister to Hawaii and an advocate of the United States'
3 annexation of the Kingdom of Hawaii, ordered United States
4 marines to land in Honolulu; and

5
6 WHEREAS, on January 17, 1893, the Committee of Safety, a
7 group of European and American businessmen who favored the
8 United States' annexation of the Kingdom of Hawaii, with the
9 support of United States Marines ordered ashore by Minister
10 Stevens and the Honolulu Rifles militia, seized control of
11 Iolani Palace, declared the Hawaiian monarchy abolished, and
12 proclaimed the existence of a provisional government until
13 annexation by the United States could be negotiated; and

14
15 WHEREAS, on January 17, 1893, Queen Liliuokalani, realizing
16 the futility of resisting American forces and in order to
17 prevent bloodshed, surrendered and relinquished her authority
18 over the Hawaiian Kingdom to the United States; and

19
20 WHEREAS, on February 1, 1893, Minister Stevens placed the
21 provisional government under the protection of the United States
22 pending annexation negotiations, landed American troops, and
23 hoisted the American flag over Hawaii; and

24
25 WHEREAS, on July 4, 1894, the Republic of Hawaii declared
26 its existence, adopted a new constitution, and declared Sanford
27 Dole its president; and

28
29 WHEREAS, in the latter part of 1894, Mr. Wilcox and other
30 Royalists loyal to Queen Liliuokalani planned a counter-
31 revolution to regain control of the Hawaiian government from
32 foreign (United States) interests, and restore Queen
33 Liliuokalani to the throne; and

34
35 WHEREAS, for two weeks in January of 1895, the armed forces
36 of the Republic of Hawaii clashed with the Royalists in an armed
37 conflict in Honolulu, concluding with the Republic of Hawaii
38 defeating the Royalists; and

39
40 WHEREAS, as a result of the January 1895 conflict, two
41 hundred Royalists, including Mr. Wilcox and Queen Liliuokalani,



1 were arrested and charged with treason against the Republic of
2 Hawaii; and

3
4 WHEREAS, on February 23, 1895, Mr. Wilcox was convicted of
5 treason by the Republic of Hawaii and was sentenced to death,
6 but his sentence was commuted to a prison term of thirty-five
7 years; and

8
9 WHEREAS, Queen Liliuokalani was placed under house arrest
10 at Iolani Palace after the conflict and signed a document
11 formally abdicating and relinquishing all claims to the throne--
12 an action she later explained that she took to prevent her
13 Royalist supporters from being executed and punished for treason
14 by the Republic of Hawaii; and

15
16 WHEREAS, on January 1, 1898, Republic of Hawaii President
17 Sanford Dole pardoned Mr. Wilcox after Queen Liliuokalani
18 formally renounced her right to the throne; and

19
20 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox zealously and successfully lobbied
21 Congress to grant universal voting rights for men in the
22 legislation that would become the 1900 Hawaiian Organic Act, to
23 ensure that Native Hawaiian interests were adequately
24 represented in the Territory of Hawaii government; and

25
26 WHEREAS, after the United States' annexation of Hawaii
27 through the Newland's Resolution in 1898 and the passage of the
28 Hawaiian Organic Act by Congress in 1900, Mr. Wilcox began
29 organizing anti-annexation Native Hawaiians into the Hawaiian
30 Independent Party, which was later called the Home Rule Party of
31 Hawaii, and Mr. Wilcox launched his candidacy for a seat in the
32 Fifty-seventh United States Congress, which he later won; and

33
34 WHEREAS, from November 6, 1900, to March 3, 1903, Mr.
35 Wilcox served in the Fifty-seventh Congress as Hawaii's first
36 Congressman and distinguished himself as a representative who
37 fought for the rights of Native Hawaiian citizens; and

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39 WHEREAS, realizing that as a United States territory,
40 Hawaii would send only non-voting representatives to Congress
41 and that Hawaii's territorial governors would be appointed by
42 the United States President and not elected by territorial



1 residents, Mr. Wilcox and other prominent Native Hawaiians
2 supported Hawaii becoming a state of the Union to ensure greater
3 local control of Hawaii's government; and

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5 WHEREAS, upon returning to Hawaii after his term in
6 Congress ended in 1903, Mr. Wilcox ran for High Sherriff of
7 Honolulu but passed away during his campaign for that office;
8 and

9
10 WHEREAS, in 1993, the United States Congress adopted Public
11 Law 103-50, often referred to as the "Apology Resolution", in
12 which the United States Congress and President of the United
13 States acknowledged the participation of the United States in
14 the wrongful overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii on January 17,
15 1893, apologized for these actions and the suppression of the
16 inherent sovereignty and self-determination of the Native
17 Hawaiian people, and called for reconciliation between Native
18 Hawaiians and the United States; and

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20 WHEREAS, this body has similarly acknowledged these
21 wrongful actions of the United States and has supported, through
22 state legislation, the right to sovereignty and self-
23 determination by and for Native Hawaiians; and

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25 WHEREAS, in 1993, a bronze statue commemorating the life
26 and accomplishments of Mr. Wilcox was erected in Wilcox Park
27 located on the Fort Street Mall located in downtown Honolulu;
28 now, therefore,

29
30 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth
31 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2016,
32 that Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilcox be remembered and
33 celebrated as a patriot and advocate for a Hawaiian government
34 that was being overrun by powerful Western interests; and

35
36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body honors the life of
37 Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilcox and his willingness to risk
38 his life and personal safety to resist the influence and
39 subsequent overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii by the United
40 States; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body acknowledges,
2 remembers, and celebrates Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilcox's
3 abiding support and advocacy for the rights of Native Hawaiian
4 citizens to vote and fully participate in their Hawaiian
5 government regardless of whether it was organized as a monarchy,
6 a provisional government, a republic, or a territory of the
7 United States; and

8
9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body expresses its
10 continuing support for the self-determination efforts of Native
11 Hawaiians as they continue to seek justice and reconciliation
12 for the actions which occurred in 1893; and

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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body acknowledges Robert
15 William Kalanihiapo Wilcox may serve as an inspiration in
16 contemporary times in advocacy efforts for Native Hawaiian self-
17 governance in various and multiple forums; and

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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
20 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the
21 Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Chief
22 Executive Officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Association
23 of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, and members of Hawaii's congressional
24 delegation.
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