
SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS TO CONVENE A STUDY GROUP TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE ON AN APPROPRIATE MEANS TO HONOR ROBERT WILLIAM KALANIHIAPO WILCOX, HAWAII'S FIRST ELECTED DELEGATE 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 England by way of Newport, Rhode
4 Island, and Kalua Makoleokalani of Maui, whose mother descended
5 directly from Pi'ilani, ancient ruler of Maui Nui, and whose
6 father descended directly from Umi, ancient ruler of Hawai'i; and
7

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox attended Haleakalā Boarding School in
9 Makawao, Maui, and in 1875 was selected by the Kingdom of Hawai'i
10 to teach school on Maui at Keawekapu, Makena and later at
11 Ulupalakua, and was elected to the Royal Legislature in 1880 to
12 serve the citizens of Wailuku and its neighboring Maui towns;
13 and
14

15 WHEREAS, in 1880, King Kalākaua selected Mr. Wilcox to
16 study at the Royal Military Academy in Turin, Italy, where he
17 excelled and was selected by Italian officers to attend the
18 Royal Application School for Engineer and Artillery Officers,
19 where he remained until the end of 1887; and
20

21 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox graduated with commendations and
22 received a commission from the Italian Minister of War as a
23 Lieutenant of Artillery, which was signed by the king of Italy;
24 and
25

26 WHEREAS, in 1887, just prior to Mr. Wilcox's return to
27 Hawai'i, the Reform Party of Hawai'i, in concert with the
28 Honolulu Rifles militia unit, imposed the Bayonet Constitution
29 on King Kalākaua; and
30



1 WHEREAS, the Bayonet Constitution limited the powers of the
2 monarchy and imposed income and property ownership requirements
3 for voting, which allowed wealthy Europeans and Americans to
4 vote even though they were not citizens of the Kingdom of
5 Hawai'i, while at the same time disenfranchising Native Hawaiian
6 citizens; and
7

8 WHEREAS, when Mr. Wilcox return to Hawai'i in late 1887, he
9 organized against the Reform Party of Hawai'i by advocating for
10 the revocation of the Bayonet Constitution of 1887; and
11

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox along with other loyalists founded the
13 Kamehameha Rifles Association with members loyal to the Kingdom
14 of Hawai'i who held similar views; and
15

16 WHEREAS, on July 30, 1889, the Kamehameha Rifles
17 Association was confronted in an armed battle by the Honolulu
18 Rifles militia unit, which was aided by a large American
19 military force from the American warship "Adam" moored in
20 Honolulu Harbor; and
21

22 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox eventually surrendered to the Honolulu
23 Rifles and was charged with treason, but eventually was
24 acquitted by a jury to the acclaim and approval of many Native
25 Hawaiian citizens; and
26

27 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox helped establish the National Reform
28 Party ('Ao'ao Lahui), which advocated restoring power to the
29 monarchy; and
30

31 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox ran for and was elected from the
32 island of O'ahu to serve on the Royal Legislature, where he
33 served from 1890 through 1894; and
34

35 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox founded a newspaper in 1892, The
36 Liberal, which advocated positions on behalf of Native Hawaiian
37 citizens in favor of adopting good government policies and
38 protecting the Hawaiian Kingdom from commercial and political
39 exploitation by foreign powers; and
40



1 WHEREAS, Queen Lili'uokalani, having succeeded to the
2 leadership of the Kingdom of Hawai'i in 1891 after the untimely
3 death of her brother King Kalākaua, realized that the Bayonet
4 Constitution placed too much power in the hands of foreigners,
5 limited the powers of the monarchy, and disenfranchised Native
6 Hawaiians, and attempted on January 14, 1893, to revoke the
7 Bayonet Constitution and to issue a new constitution to restore
8 power to the monarchy and limit the influence of foreigners; and
9

10 WHEREAS, Queen Lili'uokalani realized that her authority and
11 power as the reigning monarch of the Kingdom of Hawai'i were in
12 jeopardy from American and European business interests who were
13 plotting against her plan to adopt a new constitution; and
14

15 WHEREAS, the Queen recruited Mr. Wilcox to command the
16 field artillery unit of the Royal Guard to protect and defend
17 her and the Kingdom of Hawai'i from the influence and control of
18 these foreign interests; and
19

20 WHEREAS, on January 16, 1893, John L. Stevens, United
21 States Minister to Hawai'i and an advocate of the United States'
22 annexation of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, ordered United States
23 marines to land in Honolulu; and
24

25 WHEREAS, on January 17, 1893, a group of European and
26 American businessmen who favored the United States' annexation
27 of the Kingdom of Hawai'i formed the Committee on Safety; and
28

29 WHEREAS, the Committee on Safety, with the support of
30 United States Marines, Minister Stevens, and the Honolulu Rifles
31 militia unit, seized control of 'Iolani Palace, imprisoned Queen
32 Lili'uokalani, declared the Hawaiian monarchy abolished, and
33 proclaimed themselves the provisional government of Hawai'i until
34 annexation by the United States could be accomplished; and
35

36 WHEREAS, on January 17, 1893, Queen Lili'uokalani realized
37 the futility of resisting American forces and reasonably
38 believed that the Kingdom of Hawai'i would be restored by
39 America, just as the British had restored the Hawaiian Kingdom
40 during the reign of Kamehameha III; and
41



1 WHEREAS, the Queen, in order to prevent bloodshed,
2 surrendered and relinquished to the United States her authority
3 over the Hawaiian Kingdom; and
4

5 WHEREAS, on February 1, 1893, Minister Stevens landed
6 American troops on Hawai'i soil, placed the provisional
7 government under the protection of the United States pending
8 annexation negotiations, and hoisted the American flag over
9 Hawai'i; and
10

11 WHEREAS, on July 4, 1894, the Republic of Hawai'i (the
12 former provisional government) declared its existence, adopted a
13 new constitution, and announced Sanford Dole as its president;
14 and
15

16 WHEREAS, in the latter part of 1894, Mr. Wilcox and other
17 loyalists loyal to Queen Lili'uokalani planned a counter-
18 revolution to regain control of the Hawaiian government from
19 foreign (United States) interests, and to restore Queen
20 Lili'uokalani to the throne; and
21

22 WHEREAS, for two weeks in January of 1895, the armed forces
23 of the newly formed Republic of Hawai'i inevitably defeated the
24 loyalists from the Kamehameha Rifles Association in armed
25 conflict, in concert with many more additional armed troops from
26 American naval ships moored in Honolulu Harbor; and
27

28 WHEREAS, as a result of the January 1895 conflict, two
29 hundred loyalists, including Mr. Wilcox and Queen Lili'uokalani,
30 were arrested and charged with treason against the Republic of
31 Hawai'i; and
32

33 WHEREAS, on February 23, 1895, Mr. Wilcox was convicted of
34 treason by the Republic of Hawai'i and was sentenced to death,
35 though his sentence was eventually reduced to a prison term of
36 thirty-five years; and
37

38 WHEREAS, Queen Lili'uokalani was placed under house arrest
39 at 'Iolani Palace and was forced to sign under duress a document
40 formally abdicating and relinquishing all of her claims to the
41 throne--an action she later explained was necessary to prevent



1 her loyalist supporters from being punished for treason and
2 executed by the Republic of Hawai'i; and
3

4 WHEREAS, on January 1, 1898, Republic of Hawai'i President
5 Sanford Dole pardoned Mr. Wilcox after Queen Lili'uokalani
6 formally renounced her right to the throne; and
7

8 WHEREAS, after the United States' annexation of Hawai'i
9 through the Newland's Resolution in 1898 and to ensure that
10 Native Hawaiian interests were adequately represented in the
11 Territory of Hawai'i government, Mr. Wilcox zealously and
12 successfully lobbied the United States Congress to grant
13 universal voting rights for men in the legislation that would
14 later become the 1900 Hawaiian Organic Act; and
15

16 WHEREAS, after the passage of the Hawaiian Organic Act by
17 Congress in 1900, Mr. Wilcox organized Native Hawaiians who had
18 been anti-annexation into the Hawaiian Independent Party, which
19 was later called the Home Rule Party of Hawai'i, and with that
20 Mr. Wilcox launched his candidacy for a seat in the Fifty-
21 seventh United States Congress, which he later won; and
22

23 WHEREAS, from November 6, 1900, to March 3, 1903, Mr.
24 Wilcox served in the Fifty-seventh Congress as Hawai'i's first
25 Congressman and distinguished himself as a representative who
26 fought for the rights of citizens; and
27

28 WHEREAS, realizing that as a United States territory,
29 Hawai'i could send only non-voting representatives to Congress
30 and that Hawai'i's territorial governors would be appointed by
31 the United States President and not elected by territorial
32 residents, Mr. Wilcox and other prominent Native Hawaiians
33 supported Hawai'i becoming a state of the Union to ensure greater
34 local control of Hawaii's government by the people; and
35

36 WHEREAS, upon returning to Hawai'i after his term in
37 Congress ended in 1903, Mr. Wilcox ran for High Sherriff of
38 Honolulu but passed away during his campaign for that office;
39 and
40



1 WHEREAS, in 1993, the United States Congress adopted Public
 2 Law 103-50, often referred to as the "Apology Resolution", in
 3 which the United States Congress and President of the United
 4 States acknowledged the participation of the United States in
 5 the wrongful overthrow on January 17, 1893, of the Kingdom of
 6 Hawai'i, apologized for these actions and the suppression of the
 7 inherent sovereignty of the Native Hawaiian people, and called
 8 for reconciliation between Native Hawaiians and the United
 9 States; and

10
 11 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox was an instrumental and critically
 12 important figure in the struggles of Hawai'i from monarchy to
 13 statehood; and

14
 15 WHEREAS, Mr. Wilcox should be remembered for his abiding
 16 support and advocacy for the rights of citizens to vote and
 17 fully participate in their government regardless of whether it
 18 was organized as a monarchy, a provisional government, a
 19 republic, or a territory of the United States; now, therefore,
 20

21 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth
 22 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2017,
 23 that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs is requested to convene a
 24 study group to make recommendations to the Legislature on an
 25 appropriate means to honor Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilcox,
 26 Hawaii's first elected delegate to the United States Congress;
 27 and

28
 29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group:

- 30
 31 (1) Be comprised of the Chairperson of the Board of
 32 Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, or the
 33 Chairperson's designee, Director of Lāhui Hawaii
 34 Research Center of the University of Hawai'i, or the
 35 Director's designee, a representative of Hawai'inuiākea
 36 School of Hawaiian Knowledge of the University of
 37 Hawai'i, a representative of the Association of
 38 Hawaiian Civic Clubs, the Superintendent of Education
 39 or the Superintendent's designee, and a member of the
 40 immediate family of Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilcox;
 41



- 1 (2) Consider and make recommendations to the Legislature
2 on an appropriate means to honor Robert William
3 Kalanihiapo Wilcox's legacy of achievement, such as
4 through the dedication or naming of a public facility,
5 a public road, or other public structure in his honor
6 as the study group shall recommend;
7
- 8 (3) Consider and suggest methods that may be undertaken by
9 the Department of Education to develop public school
10 curriculum and other materials to inform, educate, and
11 increase awareness of public school students and the
12 general public about Robert William Kalanihiapo
13 Wilcox's life and accomplishments;
14
- 15 (4) Report its recommendations, including proposed
16 legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty
17 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of
18 2018; and
19
- 20 (5) Be dissolved on June 30, 2018; and
21

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
23 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
24 Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Superintendent of
25 Education, Director of Lāhui Hawai'i Research Center of the
26 University of Hawai'i, Dean of the Hawai'inuiākea School of
27 Hawaiian Knowledge of the University of Hawai'i, Chair of the
28 Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, and immediate family of
29 Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilcox.

