

ACT 102

H.B. NO. 349

A Bill for an Act Relating to International Yoga Day.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that yoga is a long standing aspect of Indian civilization and gift to humanity. According to the Yoga Sutras 1.2, “*yogas citta vrtti nirodhah*,” which is translated as “yoga is the focused tranquility of the mind.” Its practice emphasizes moral, physical, and mental well-being resulting in physical, mental, and spiritual balance. Yoga is not just physical exercise; it is a spiritual path to control the mind and senses and to know one’s higher self and purpose in life, and it encourages living in harmony with society and nature. Yoga is a way of life and can promote health and well-being and insight into addressing environmental concerns and facilitating world peace. More than three hundred million people around the world practice some form of yoga.

According to the 2016 *Yoga in America Study*, which queried over two thousand members of the general population and over one thousand seven hundred yoga practitioners in the United States, over thirty-six million people in the United States practice yoga, seventy-four per cent of whom have been practicing for five years or less, which demonstrates the relative newness of the interest in yoga. The study revealed that yoga practitioners are drawn to yoga for a variety of reasons, including flexibility, stress relief, general fitness, overall health, and physical fitness. Additionally, yoga provides an economic benefit; Americans spent \$16,000,000,000 on yoga instruction, gear, and accessories, including \$5,800,000,000 on yoga classes and \$4,600,000,000 on clothes to engage in yoga. The study also found that about thirty-seven per cent of yoga practitioners have children under the age of eighteen who have practiced yoga.

The legislature further finds that the United Nations adopted a resolution on December 11, 2014, proclaiming June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. One hundred seventy-five countries cosponsored the resolution. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature.

The legislature further finds that yoga provides a holistic approach to health and well-being, and wider dissemination of information about the benefits of practicing yoga would be beneficial for the health of Hawaii's population. The practice of yoga is beneficial to the people of Hawaii, including children, as it lowers stress, reduces health problems and health insurance costs, and promotes healthy living among adults and the elderly population. Currently, yoga is being taught to inmates in Hawaii prisons.

The purpose of this Act is to establish June 21 of each year as International Yoga Day to promote the practice of yoga to increase the health and well-being of the people of Hawaii.

SECTION 2. Chapter 8, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§8- International Yoga Day. June 21 of each year shall be known and designated as “International Yoga Day”; provided that this day is not and shall not be construed to be a state holiday.”

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved June 21, 2019.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.