

ACT 81

S.B. NO. 2202

A Bill for an Act Relating to Volunteer Month.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that statistics released in November 2018 by the Corporation for National and Community Service, also known as Americorps, show that approximately seventy-seven million Americans volunteered a total of nearly seven billion hours in 2017, which is estimated to be worth \$167,000,000,000 in value.

The legislature acknowledges that many public agencies and private organizations in small towns, rural counties, and even the largest cities would not be able to function without the services provided by volunteers. From the anonymous volunteers who donate their resources to those whose efforts are part of a national organization or local grassroots group, volunteers provide valuable support to communities in times of need, including services such as fundraising; preparing, distributing, or serving food; mentoring youth; engaging in general labor; supplying transportation; providing professional or management assistance; supporting and staffing fire and ambulance departments; and providing medical care. The legislature also recognizes that volunteerism strengthens the foundation of neighborhoods and communities, as it magnifies one's ability to perform good works and contribute to the greater good, and creates social momentum that increases the volunteer's desire to engage fully with the community.

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The legislature also finds that in 1974, the United States, through presidential proclamation, designated the third week of April as National Volunteer Week to support, extend, and enhance the vital and valuable services offered by volunteers. Since then, National Volunteer Week has grown exponentially with thousands of volunteer projects and special events scheduled throughout the week. The legislature also acknowledges that in 1991, the month of April became National Volunteer Month as part of President George H. W. Bush's A Thousand Points of Light campaign, as a month dedicated to honoring the volunteers in communities and encouraging volunteerism.

The selfless dedication of services by volunteers in the country has been essential, especially while the nation confronted and continues to recover from the challenges caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. Countless individuals volunteered their time, effort, and skills to administer vaccines; staff vaccination centers; conduct testing and contact tracing; and provide food, water, and other necessities to individuals who were required to stay home during this hardship. In recognition of the enduring contributions of these volunteers, on April 16, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden issued a proclamation designating April 18 through April 24, 2021, as National Volunteer Week, calling upon all Americans to observe the week by volunteering in service projects across the country and pledging to make service a part of their daily lives.

The purpose of this Act is to designate the month of April of each year as the State's volunteer month to honor volunteers in the community and encourage participation in service projects throughout the month.

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

“§8- Volunteer Month. The month of April shall be known and designated as “Volunteer Month” to honor volunteers in the community and encourage participation in service projects throughout the month. This month is not and shall not be construed as a state holiday.”

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

(Approved June 17, 2022.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.