THE SENATE TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE, 2008 STATE OF HAWAII S.C.R. NO. 208

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## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE PEOPLE OF KALAUPAPA AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR THEIR SACRIFICES, AND APOLOGIZING TO THE PEOPLE OF KALAUPAPA AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR ANY HARSH RESTRICTIONS THAT CAUSED THEM UNDUE PAIN AS THE RESULT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES SURROUNDING LEPROSY.

1 WHEREAS, from 1866 to 1969, an estimated 8,000 citizens of 2 Hawai'i were forced to leave their families and to be isolated, 3 most often on the Kalaupapa peninsula, because of society's fear 4 of leprosy (also known as Hansen's disease); and

6 WHEREAS, these individuals were mothers and fathers, sons
7 and daughters, brothers and sisters who were separated at all
8 ages, from very young to very old; and

10 WHEREAS, for many of these residents, the separation was 11 permanent, yet, because they felt they were protecting the 12 general public from a disease that was not curable until the 13 1940s, most people diagnosed with leprosy willingly made this 14 greatest of sacrifices; and

16 WHEREAS, these sacrifices were made because these heroic 17 individuals did not want anyone else to experience this disease, 18 which was not only physically painful, but also emotionally 19 difficult to bear; and

21 WHEREAS, despite being exiled by their own government and 22 suffering great deprivations and injustices throughout much of 23 their lives, the people of Kalaupapa have been remarkably 24 resilient and have responded to their situations with kindness, 25 generosity, and forgiveness rather than anger, bitterness, and 26 despair; and

28 WHEREAS, the families of those sent to Kalaupapa also29 suffered unimaginable pain; and



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WHEREAS, fathers and mothers were forced to take their 1 unsuspecting children diagnosed with leprosy to a designated 2 facility and leave them there, resulting in farewells of agony 3 and sorrow; and 4 5 WHEREAS, those same parents would later watch from the 6 docks as their children were loaded onto the ships destined for 7 Kalaupapa, possibly the last time they would see one another; 8 9 and 10 WHEREAS, children born to the people of Kalaupapa were 11 immediately taken away at birth and grew up with other relatives 12 or in orphanages, and, if they were fortunate, would eventually 13 14 get to know their parents, but not until they were nearly adults or older; and 15 16 WHEREAS, relationships between parents and children could 17 be difficult to establish and maintain because of the forced 18 separation; and 19 20 WHEREAS, the Kalaupapa residents and their families have 21 mostly accepted their circumstances throughout the years and put 22 their lives back together as best they could; and 23 24 WHEREAS, even after the medicine to control leprosy was 25 introduced in 1946, the government was still slow to end the 26 isolation laws which were not abolished until 1969, allowing 27 anyone diagnosed with leprosy to be treated at home with no fear 28 of separation; and 29 30 WHEREAS, there has never been an official acknowledgement 31 to the people of Kalaupapa for all that they did and the 32 exemplary manner in how they have lived their lives; now, 33 34 therefore, 35 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth 36 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the 37 House of Representatives concurring, that the Legislature 38 recognizes and acknowledges the people of Kalaupapa and their 39 families for their sacrifices, for thinking more of the public 40 than of themselves, for giving up freedoms and opportunities the 41 rest of society takes for granted, for rebuilding their lives 42 with pride and dignity, for overcoming prejudice and 43

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1 discrimination, and for consistently reaching out to others in 2 need; and 3

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature, on behalf of past governments of Hawai'i, apologizes to the people of Kalaupapa and their families for any harsh restrictions that caused them undue pain as the result of government policies surrounding leprosy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this overdue action be issued with the utmost respect and admiration for those remaining Ralaupapa residents, the descendents of those who have died and family members who all have endured separation from loved ones and the anguish that came with it; and with the hope that such severe measures of separation and injustice are never imposed upon people with a disease ever again; and

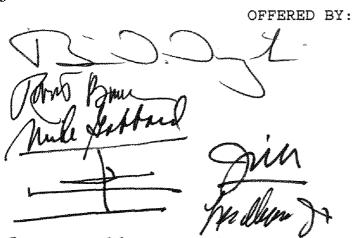
18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this 19 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to all the residents of 20 Kalaupapa, Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, the Governor, the Director of 21 Health, and the Superintendent of Kalaupapa National Historical 22 Park.

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