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HOUSE RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING THE RECOGNITION OF COCKFIGHTING AS A CULTURAL ACTIVITY.

WHEREAS, cockfighting has a long and cherished tradition in many cultures throughout the world, from Europe to the Americas to Asia, and has even been part of American culture since colonial times; and

WHEREAS, two founding fathers of our country -- George Washington and Thomas Jefferson -- recognized the value of cockfighting as participants in the activity, and Abraham Lincoln was nicknamed "Honest Abe" not for his politics, but because of his honesty as a cockfight referee; and

WHEREAS, cockfighting is a proud Hispanic tradition -- one many are unwilling to give up -- and a legal activity in Mexico; and

WHEREAS, according to those involved in the activity, roosters are neither brutalized nor forced to fight, as fights occur as a natural part of the process of establishing a pecking order among the birds; and

WHEREAS, although an important part of the activity, the fighting plays only a minor role: it takes two years to raise a fighting cock, and caring for game fowl is a day-in and day-out responsibility; and

WHEREAS, unlike the millions of factory-farm chickens that are raised in cramped and crowded pens before being slaughtered for human consumption, gamecocks are raised in fresh air and sunshine and are given plenty of room to move around; and

WHEREAS, gamecock breeders in the United States spend millions of dollars annually on chicken feed and related supplies, pay to ship birds to other breeders or places where cockfighting is legal, and pay for travel to cockfighting

tournaments, making a considerable contribution to the economy; and

WHEREAS, according to a spokesperson for the Hawaii game fowl industry, Hawaii game fowl breeders legally pump an estimated \$9,000,000 into the local economy each year, which is subject to general excise taxes; and

WHEREAS, successful breeders maintain studbooks that trace the lineage of their birds over many generations, and the primary purpose of fighting them is to prove the breeder's success in elevating bloodline quality; and

WHEREAS, those who stigmatize cockfighting may not understand these anthropological and other aspects of the activity, or its cultural significance; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that this body supports the recognition of cockfighting as a cultural activity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and Mayor of each county.

OFFERED BY:

MAR 1 0 2010