

MAR 12 2021

---

---

# SENATE RESOLUTION

REAFFIRMING A COMMITMENT TO ENDING SYSTEMIC RACISM AND INJUSTICE  
IN HAWAII AND THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

1           WHEREAS, in September 1959, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
2 addressed the First Legislature of the State of Hawaii,  
3 explaining, "segregation is still with us. We are confronted in  
4 the South in its glaring and conspicuous forms and we are  
5 confronted in almost every other section of the nation in its  
6 hidden and subtle forms. While lynchings have ceased to a great  
7 extent, other things are happening. Churches are being bombed  
8 . . . we know that there are still conniving forces being used  
9 to keep the Negro from being a registered voter."; and

10  
11           WHEREAS, in February 1964, a coalition of political,  
12 business, and community leaders in Hawaii, including  
13 congressional elected officials; labor unions such as the Hawaii  
14 Government Employees Union, International Longshore and  
15 Warehouse Union, and the AFL-CIO; the Chamber of Commerce and  
16 local businesses; publishers of the major newspapers and  
17 television news stations; Catholic, Buddhist, Jewish, and other  
18 faiths; University of Hawaii; Hawaii Civil Rights Commission;  
19 and with leadership from the local National Association for the  
20 Advancement of Colored People, joined together; and

21  
22           WHEREAS, Hawaii's leaders jointly declared that, "Hawaii is  
23 one of the few areas in the world where people of varied racial,  
24 religious, and ethnic backgrounds have learned to live and work  
25 together without serious friction," however, "detachment and  
26 lack of involvement in the civil rights struggle is not a policy  
27 that we of Hawaii should follow. It is our conviction that we  
28 cannot assume that this crucial issue affecting our nation is  
29 'not our problem.' . . . Hawaii has an obligation to bear  
30 witness to the rest of the nation. We do this not out of a  
31 sense of self-righteousness, but with deep humility, for we are  
32 aware that race relations in Hawaii are not without need of  
33 improvement."; and

34  
35           WHEREAS, Hawaii has a long and storied history among its  
36 different peoples, beginning with the meeting of indigenous



1 Kanaka Maoli and European settlers, through the arrival of the  
2 first Black people in the early 1800s, who worked as deckhands  
3 on merchant and whaling ships, and to the immigration of  
4 numerous races and ethnicities from countries around the Pacific  
5 rim over the following century; and  
6

7 WHEREAS, despite the challenges of integration, Hawaii has  
8 been a world leader striving to seek harmony and justice for all  
9 races, adopting in its constitution a decade before the American  
10 Civil War and Emancipation Proclamation a provision that,  
11 "[s]lavery shall, under no circumstances whatsoever, be  
12 tolerated in the Hawaiian Islands"; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, the long path toward building a peaceful and  
15 integrated island society has seen minority communities endure  
16 shared systemic oppression, but make progress together through a  
17 shared fight for equal rights, justice, respect, and aloha for  
18 all, including Black residents joining Kanaka Maoli in their  
19 fight for liberation and protest against the annexation of the  
20 Kingdom of Hawaii by the United States; and  
21

22 WHEREAS, in his address to Hawaii's First Legislature,  
23 Dr. King explained, "we have come a long, long way but in order  
24 to tell the truth, it is necessary to move on and say we have a  
25 long, long way to go. If we stop here, we would be the victims  
26 of a dangerous optimism. We would be the victims of an illusion  
27 wrapped in superficiality."; and  
28

29 WHEREAS, Dr. King closed by challenging Hawaii's  
30 Legislature, "Segregation debilitates the white man as well as  
31 the Negro. We are to free all men, all races, and all groups.  
32 This is our responsibility, and this is our challenge; and we  
33 look to this great new state in our Union as the example and as  
34 the inspiration."; and  
35

36 WHEREAS, thanks to generations of vigilance by our local  
37 forbearers, today racial, ethnic, and religious communities in  
38 Hawaii coexist more peacefully than in many other places, though  
39 we are still far from perfect and racism persists toward the  
40 Black, Micronesian, and Kanaka Maoli communities, among others,  
41 and we must continue to address the effects of the hidden  
42 skeleton of systemic injustice, which has been woven into laws,



1 institutions, and economic advancement since the overthrow of  
2 the Hawaiian Kingdom; and  
3

4 WHEREAS, throughout the United States the Black community  
5 and other minorities continue to fight overt and systemic racial  
6 injustice and disenfranchisement, which continues to claim  
7 lives, prosperity, and the potential of future generations, and  
8 has manifested a renewed national movement to stand vigilant and  
9 reaffirm this generation's commitment to ending racism and  
10 injustice; and  
11

12 WHEREAS, in 2020, a new wave of racism and prejudice toward  
13 those of Asian descent erupted around the country, prompted by  
14 unjust misconceptions related to the spread of the coronavirus  
15 disease 2019 (COVID-19), which has renewed conversations about  
16 racism toward all minorities across the country; and  
17

18 WHEREAS, if Hawaii is to live up to the challenge set forth  
19 to the State's First Legislature by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;  
20 if Hawaii is to live up to the commitment of our forbearers to  
21 stand vigilant and bear witness to racism and injustice; and if  
22 Hawaii is to live up to our local values of respect and aloha  
23 for all, then today we cannot remain silent amidst racism and  
24 injustice anywhere; now, therefore,  
25

26 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
27 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021,  
28 that while significant progress has been made, this body is  
29 urged to recognize that overt and systemic racism and injustice  
30 continue to harm people throughout the country; and  
31

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Hawaii cannot ignore ongoing  
33 cases of racism and injustice locally, in particular against the  
34 Micronesian and Kanaka Maoli communities in the islands that are  
35 among the most affected; and  
36

37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate and the House of  
38 Representatives of the Thirty-first Legislature, reaffirms the  
39 State's commitment to ending systemic racism and injustice in  
40 Hawaii and throughout the United States, and calls on every  
41 Hawaii government institution, business, and organization, as  
42 well as the United States Congress and the President of the



1 United States, to lead by example and to take every available  
2 action to achieve this attainable goal, for ourselves and for  
3 future generations; and  
4

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
6 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States;  
7 Speaker of the United States House of Representatives; Majority  
8 Leader of the United States Senate; Governor; and Mayors of each  
9 county.  
10  
11  
12

OFFERED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. W. ...', written over a horizontal line.