

MAR 11 2022

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

DESIGNATING MARCH 10 AS ENEWETAK ATOLL (MARSHALL ISLANDS)
LIBERATION DAY.

1 WHEREAS, Enewetak Atoll is a large coral atoll of forty
2 islands that forms a legislative district of the Ralik Chain of
3 the Marshall Islands, now known as the Republic of the Marshall
4 Islands in the Central Pacific Ocean; and

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6 WHEREAS, Enewetak Atoll, with the rest of the Marshall
7 Islands, was captured by the Imperial Japanese Navy in 1914
8 during World War I and mandated to the Empire of Japan by the
9 League of Nations in 1920; and

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11 WHEREAS, many inhabitants of the Marshall Islands initially
12 welcomed the new governance as the Japanese worked to build up
13 infrastructure, including schools, and to increase economic
14 trade in the Islands; and

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16 WHEREAS, with the outbreak of World War II, the Japanese
17 military took over administration of the Marshall Islands and
18 began fortifying several of the atolls; and

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20 WHEREAS, as the war progressed and support and supplies
21 from Japan dwindled, starvation beset both the Japanese and the
22 inhabitants of the Marshall Islands; and

23
24 WHEREAS, as conditions worsened, the Marshallese population
25 was subjected to physical harm, hard labor, shameful punishment,
26 and hunger; and

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28 WHEREAS, towards the end of World War II, inhabitants of
29 the Marshall Islands suffered from fear, displacement,
30 deprivation, and starvation, and were subjected to executions;
31 and
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1 WHEREAS, the United States captured Enewetak Atoll in a
2 five-day amphibious operation between February 17 and
3 February 23, 1944, during what is known as the Battle of
4 Eniwetok; and

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6 WHEREAS, Enewetak residents commemorated March 10, 1944, as
7 the day they "came out of the holes (bomb shelters)" following
8 the Battle of Eniwetok; and

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10 WHEREAS, after gaining military control of the Marshall
11 Islands from Japan, the United States assumed administrative
12 control of the Islands in 1947 under United Nations auspices as
13 part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, to protect
14 the inhabitants against the loss of their lands and resources as
15 well as their health; and

16
17 WHEREAS, attracted by its remote location, sparse
18 population, and nearby U.S. military bases, the United States
19 began using the Marshall Islands as a living laboratory for
20 nuclear testing to better understand the impacts of radioactive
21 weaponry on human beings and the environment; and

22
23 WHEREAS, from 1946 to 1958, the United States detonated
24 sixty-seven atmospheric and underwater nuclear weapons in the
25 Marshall Islands, of which forty-two were in Enewetak Atoll,
26 with a combined power of 7,200 Hiroshima-sized bombs, that is
27 equivalent to 1.6 Hiroshima bombs every day for twelve years;
28 and

29
30 WHEREAS, the Castle Bravo high-yield nuclear test carried
31 out on Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954, is the largest weapon ever
32 detonated by the United States, with an explosion that was more
33 than twenty-one times larger than expected and one thousand
34 times more powerful than each of the atomic bombs dropped on
35 Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and

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37 WHEREAS, the unexpectedly large yield of the Castle Bravo
38 test led to the most significant radiological contamination
39 caused by the United States, dropping radioactive ash for more
40 than seven thousand square miles onto nearby islands including
41 Enewetak, Rongea, Utiri, Ailuk, Likiep, Ailinginae, and other
42 atolls; however, the United States government did not inform the



1 residents that the winds had shifted such that these locations
2 may experience nuclear fallout; and

3
4 WHEREAS, from 1977 to 1980, the United States government
5 cemented and enclosed an estimated three million one hundred
6 thousand cubic feet--or thirty-five Olympic-sized swimming
7 pools--of radioactive soil and debris produced by the United
8 States, including lethal amounts of plutonium, irradiated
9 military and construction equipment, contaminated soil and
10 plutonium-laced chunks of metal pulverized by the bombs
11 detonated throughout the Enewetak Atoll, into an unlined nuclear
12 blast crater on Runit Island and capped it with a concrete dome
13 at sea-level, now known as the Runit Dome; and

14
15 WHEREAS, the Runit Dome, which is not sealed at the bottom
16 like other waste depositories, has fissured significantly over
17 time, and is at the risk of collapsing due to rising sea levels
18 and other effects of climate change, thereby raising concerns of
19 radioactive material being leaked into the ocean, which would
20 have disastrous effects on the environment for thousands of
21 years; and

22
23 WHEREAS, the Runit Dome is the most visible manifestation
24 of the United States' nuclear legacy, a symbol of the sacrifices
25 the Marshallese people made for the security of the United
26 States, the United States' failure to take ownership of the
27 environmental catastrophe it left behind, and the broken
28 promises the Marshallese people received in return; and

29
30 WHEREAS, the March 1st anniversary of the Castle Bravo
31 detonation is designated as Remembrance Day in the Marshall
32 Islands, a national holiday to honor the victims and survivors
33 of the fifteen-megaton dry fuel thermonuclear hydrogen bomb
34 device; and

35
36 WHEREAS, the Marshallese people experience numerous
37 challenges today connected to the United States nuclear legacy,
38 such as communities that cannot return to their ancestral lands
39 because of lingering contamination, those who were prematurely
40 resettled on contaminated lands, and health issues related to
41 radiation exposure and diaspora, including cancer and other
42 radiogenic illnesses; and



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WHEREAS, the Compact of Free Association (COFA) Act of 1985, P.L. 99-239, approved a joint resolution between the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands that terminated United States' trusteeship and established the Republic of the Marshall Islands as an independent nation effective October 21, 1986; and

WHEREAS, the COFA Amendments Act of 2003, P.L. 108-188, amended the Compacts in a number of significant ways, including changing the immigration provisions and the citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands have the right to live, study, and work in the United States without a visa; and

WHEREAS, many people from Enewetak Atoll currently reside in Ocean View on the island of Hawaii and pay taxes to the local, state, and federal governments; and

WHEREAS, the people of the Marshall Islands volunteer to serve in the United States Armed Forces at a higher rate per capital compared to United State citizens; and

WHEREAS, the March 10th coming-out-of-the-holes day in Enewetak Atoll, which began in 1944 as a social practice infused with fear, was selected as a day of celebration in the 1970s to commemorate the defeat of Japanese forces by the United States military, and came to be known as "Liberation Day" in the 1980s, one of the most important and enjoyable events on Enewetak Atoll; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022, the House of Representatives concurring, that March 10 be designated as Enewetak Atoll (Marshall Islands) Liberation Day in honor of the Enewetak Atoll (Marshall Islands) community in Hawaii; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President of the



S.C.R. NO. 179

1 Republic of the Marshall Islands, Governor, Mayor of the County
2 of Hawaii; Mayor of Enewetak Atoll; and Consul General of the
3 Republic of the Marshall Islands in Honolulu.

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OFFERED BY: _____

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