

MAR 11 2022

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# SENATE 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

10  
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

15  
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

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

27  
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

32  
33           WHEREAS, the United States captured Enewetak Atoll in a  
34 five-day amphibious operation between February 17 and



1 February 23, 1944, during what is known as the Battle of  
2 Eniwetok; and

3  
4 WHEREAS, Enewetak residents commemorated March 10, 1944, as  
5 the day they "came out of the holes (bomb shelters)" following  
6 the Battle of Eniwetok; and

7  
8 WHEREAS, after gaining military control of the Marshall  
9 Islands from Japan, the United States assumed administrative  
10 control of the Islands in 1947 under United Nations auspices as  
11 part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, to protect  
12 the inhabitants against the loss of their lands and resources as  
13 well as their health; and

14  
15 WHEREAS, attracted by its remote location, sparse  
16 population, and nearby U.S. military bases, the United States  
17 began using the Marshall Islands as a living laboratory for  
18 nuclear testing to better understand the impacts of radioactive  
19 weaponry on human beings and the environment; and

20  
21 WHEREAS, from 1946 to 1958, the United States detonated  
22 sixty-seven atmospheric and underwater nuclear weapons in the  
23 Marshall Islands, of which forty-two were in Enewetak Atoll,  
24 with a combined power of 7,200 Hiroshima-sized bombs, that is  
25 equivalent to 1.6 Hiroshima bombs every day for twelve years;  
26 and

27  
28 WHEREAS, the Castle Bravo high-yield nuclear test carried  
29 out on Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954, is the largest weapon ever  
30 detonated by the United States, with an explosion that was more  
31 than twenty-one times larger than expected and one thousand  
32 times more powerful than each of the atomic bombs dropped on  
33 Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and

34  
35 WHEREAS, the unexpectedly large yield of the Castle Bravo  
36 test led to the most significant radiological contamination  
37 caused by the United States, dropping radioactive ash for more  
38 than seven thousand square miles onto nearby islands including  
39 Enewetak, Rongea, Utiri, Ailuk, Likiep, Ailinginae, and other  
40 atolls; however, the United States government did not inform the  
41 residents that the winds had shifted such that these locations  
42 may experience nuclear fallout; and



1  
2 WHEREAS, from 1977 to 1980, the United States government  
3 cemented and enclosed an estimated three million one hundred  
4 thousand cubic feet--or thirty-five Olympic-sized swimming  
5 pools--of radioactive soil and debris produced by the United  
6 States, including lethal amounts of plutonium, irradiated  
7 military and construction equipment, contaminated soil and  
8 plutonium-laced chunks of metal pulverized by the bombs  
9 detonated throughout the Enewetak Atoll, into an unlined nuclear  
10 blast crater on Runit Island and capped it with a concrete dome  
11 at sea-level, now known as the Runit Dome; and  
12

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

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

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

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



1 WHEREAS, the Compact of Free Association (COFA) Act of  
2 1985, P.L. 99-239, approved a joint resolution between the  
3 United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands that  
4 terminated United States' trusteeship and established the  
5 Republic of the Marshall Islands as an independent nation  
6 effective October 21, 1986; and  
7

8 WHEREAS, the COFA Amendments Act of 2003, P.L. 108-188,  
9 amended the Compacts in a number of significant ways, including  
10 changing the immigration provisions and the citizens of the  
11 Republic of the Marshall Islands have the right to live, study,  
12 and work in the United States without a visa; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, many people from Enewetak Atoll currently reside  
15 in Ocean View on the island of Hawaii and pay taxes to the  
16 local, state, and federal governments; and  
17

18 WHEREAS, the people of the Marshall Islands volunteer to  
19 serve in the United States Armed Forces at a higher rate per  
20 capital compared to United State citizens; and  
21

22 WHEREAS, the March 10th coming-out-of-the-holes day in  
23 Enewetak Atoll, which began in 1944 as a social practice infused  
24 with fear, was selected as a day of celebration in the 1970s to  
25 commemorate the defeat of Japanese forces by the United States  
26 military, and came to be known as "Liberation Day" in the 1980s,  
27 one of the most important and enjoyable events on Enewetak  
28 Atoll; now, therefore,  
29

30 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
31 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022,  
32 that March 10 be designated as Enewetak Atoll (Marshall Islands)  
33 Liberation Day in honor of the Enewetak Atoll (Marshall Islands)  
34 community in Hawaii; and  
35

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
37 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the  
38



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 'DK', is written over a horizontal line.