
SENATE RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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29 WHEREAS, towards the end of World War II, inhabitants of
30 the Marshall Islands, including Enewetak Atoll, suffered from
31 fear, displacement, deprivation, and starvation, and were
32 subjected to executions; and



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, for the
14 purpose of protecting the inhabitants against the loss of their
15 lands and resources as well as their health; and
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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 materials on human beings and the environment; and
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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 people of the Marshall Islands, including
31 Enewetak Atoll, experience numerous challenges today connected
32 to the United States nuclear legacy, such as displaced
33 communities that cannot return to their ancestral lands because
34 of lingering contamination, those who were prematurely resettled
35 on contaminated lands, and health issues related to radiation
36 exposure and diaspora, including cancer and other radiogenic
37 illnesses; and
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39 WHEREAS, the Compact of Free Association (COFA) Act of
40 1985, P.L. 99-239, approved a joint resolution between the
41 United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands that
42 terminated the United States' trusteeship and established the



1 Republic of the Marshall Islands as an independent nation
2 effective October 21, 1986; and
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4 WHEREAS, the COFA Amendments Act of 2003, P.L. 108-188,
5 amended the Compact in a number of significant ways, including
6 changing the immigration provisions and providing that the
7 citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, including
8 those from Enewetak Atoll, have the right to live, study, and
9 work in the United States without a visa; and
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11 WHEREAS, many people from Enewetak Atoll are displaced
12 immigrants who currently reside in Hawaiian Ocean View Estates
13 on the island of Hawaii; and
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15 WHEREAS, the March 10th coming-out-of-the-holes day in
16 Enewetak Atoll, which began in 1944 as a social practice infused
17 with fear, was selected as a day of celebration in the 1970s to
18 commemorate the defeat of Japanese forces by the United States
19 military, and came to be known as "Liberation Day" in the 1980s,
20 one of the most important and enjoyable events on Enewetak
21 Atoll; now, therefore,
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23 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
24 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022,
25 that March 10 be designated as Enewetak Atoll (Marshall Islands)
26 Liberation Day in honor and remembrance of the people of
27 Enewetak Atoll and the community of their descendants in Hawaii;
28 and
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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
31 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Mayor of the County
32 of Hawaii, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands,
33 Mayor of Enewetak Atoll, and Consul General of the Republic of
34 the Marshall Islands in Honolulu.

