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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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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  
2 WHEREAS, the United States captured Enewetak Atoll in a  
3 five-day amphibious operation between February 17 and  
4 February 23, 1944, during what is known as the Battle of  
5 Eniwetok; and  
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7 WHEREAS, Enewetak residents commemorated March 10, 1944, as  
8 the day they "came out of the holes (bomb shelters)" following  
9 the Battle of Eniwetok; and  
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11 WHEREAS, after gaining military control of the Marshall  
12 Islands from Japan, the United States assumed administrative  
13 control of the Islands in 1947 under United Nations auspices as  
14 part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, for the  
15 purpose of protecting the inhabitants against the loss of their  
16 lands and resources as well as their health; and  
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18 WHEREAS, attracted by its remote location, sparse  
19 population, and nearby U.S. military bases, the United States  
20 began using the Marshall Islands as a living laboratory for  
21 nuclear testing to better understand the impacts of radioactive  
22 materials on human beings and the environment; and  
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24 WHEREAS, from 1946 to 1958, the United States detonated  
25 sixty-seven atmospheric and underwater nuclear weapons in the  
26 Marshall Islands, of which forty-two were in Enewetak Atoll,  
27 with a combined power of 7,200 Hiroshima-sized bombs, that is  
28 equivalent to 1.6 Hiroshima bombs every day for twelve years;  
29 and  
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31 WHEREAS, the people of the Marshall Islands, including  
32 Enewetak Atoll, experience numerous challenges today connected  
33 to the United States nuclear legacy, such as displaced  
34 communities that cannot return to their ancestral lands because  
35 of lingering contamination, those who were prematurely resettled  
36 on contaminated lands, and health issues related to radiation  
37 exposure and diaspora, including cancer and other radiogenic  
38 illnesses; and  
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40 WHEREAS, the Compact of Free Association (COFA) Act of  
41 1985, P.L. 99-239, approved a joint resolution between the  
42 United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands that



1 terminated the United States' trusteeship and established the  
2 Republic of the Marshall Islands as an independent nation  
3 effective October 21, 1986; and  
4

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

