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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

DECLARING DISINFORMATION AND DIGITAL HATE SPEECH AS THREATS TO DEMOCRACY AND URGING DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES TO ADDRESS THESE THREATS.

WHEREAS, disinformation and digital hate speech are pervasive threats to modern society; and

WHEREAS, a 2018 report published by Statista found that sixty-four percent of teenagers in the United States have encountered hate speech on social media; and

WHEREAS, disinformation and digital hate speech have been linked to acts of violence, including mass shootings at a church in Charleston, North Carolina, and a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, just under half of the deaths caused by right-wing incidents were committed by people who showed support for white supremacy; and

WHEREAS, in a June 2019 report entitled Hate Speech on Social Media: Global Comparisons, the Council on Foreign Relations noted that digital hate speech has been linked to a global increase in violence toward minorities; and

WHEREAS, the same study found that policies used to curb digital hate speech are often inconsistently enforced by social media companies; and

WHEREAS, from 2015 to 2020, the use of websites and social media by right-wing extremists rose in five of the six years; and

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WHEREAS, disinformation and digital hate speech have also been linked to the insurrection that occurred at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021; and

WHEREAS, a 2021 Washington Post investigation found that right-wing extremists have been involved in two hundred sixty-seven plots or attacks in the United States since 2015, resulting in ninety-one fatalities; and

WHEREAS, to safeguard the vital functions of democracy and public service, the State has an obligation to protect government institutions, public officials, and public employees from threats of violent extremism that are organized online; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, the Senate concurring, that this body declares disinformation and digital hate speech as threats to democracy and urges all state departments and agencies to address these threats; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all State departments and agencies are urged to address disinformation and digital hate speech by:

(1) Developing public safety plans to protect public institutions and employees from threats of violence that are organized online;

(2) Increasing access to media literacy and training in how to effectively identify and respond to disinformation and digital hate speech;

(3) Establishing trauma-informed protocols to assist those who are targeted and harmed by disinformation and digital hate speech; and

(4) Making any necessary amendments to rules and policies to address disinformation and hate speech; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor: Comptroller; Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture; Attorney General; Director of Finance; Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Adjutant General; Chairperson of the Board of Education; Superintendent of Education; Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission; Director of Health; Director of Human Resources Development; 10 Director of Human Services; Director of Labor and Industrial 11 Relations; Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; Director of Law Enforcement; Director of Taxation; 13 Director of Transportation; President of the University of Hawaii System; and Chief Information Officer of the Office of 14 Enterprise Technology Services. 15

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OFFERED BY:

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