

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO RICHARD "BUFFALO" KEAULANA DAY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Richard "Buffalo"
2 Keaulana was an iconic surfer and lifesaver. Born on
3 September 2, 1935, in Honolulu, Keaulana learned to surf as a
4 young boy in the gentle rollers off Waikiki. Keaulana
5 eventually graduated to the level of "beach boy" before his
6 family settled in his home community of Makaha. Keaulana grew
7 to be known as one of Hawaii's most naturally talented surfers.
8 His smooth style, switch-stance skills, and "nose for the
9 pocket" made him a favorite at the annual Makaha International
10 contest, an event he won in 1960. Keaulana captured six of the
11 top-four finishes in the contest between 1957 and 1965. His
12 achievements led many to consider him the world's best
13 bodysurfer at the time.

14 Along with his renowned surfing talent, Keaulana was named
15 Makaha's chief lifeguard in 1969, a position he held for over
16 two decades. He came to be known as the "mayor of Makaha", and
17 in 1972, the community erected a statue in his honor in front of



1 the Makaha library. Keaulana was also honored with an annual
2 surf contest and beach party in his name, Buffalo's Big Board
3 Classic, which continues to be a community mainstay today.
4 Additionally, in 2010, Keaulana was inducted into the Outrigger
5 Duke Kahanamoku Foundation hall of fame. Perhaps his greatest
6 honor and achievement was becoming the patriarch of his own West
7 Oahu dynasty, currently in its third generation. Two of his six
8 children have noteworthy careers in surfing: Brian, a
9 world-class waterman and big-wave surfer; and Rusty, a
10 three-time world longboard champion (1993-1995). His family
11 continues to be known as "Makaha's first family".

12 Richard "Buffalo" Keaulana's enduring legacy of aloha has
13 touched generations of ocean lovers and surfers worldwide. A
14 friend and fellow beach boy of Duke Kahanamoku, Keaulana's
15 contributions to the sport of surfing and Hawaiian cultural
16 restoration are everlasting. In 1976, Keaulana was on the first
17 voyage of the Hokulea to Tahiti, acting as the voyaging canoe's
18 steersman. His unique nickname, "Buffalo", derives from his
19 constant connection and companionship with the water, in
20 addition to his "large head and copious amounts of hair", as his
21 friends would describe him. As Makaha's first lifeguard,



1 Keaulana's legacy extends beyond surfing and his ambassadorship
2 of aloha. He not only was essential in protecting swimmers in
3 Makaha's rough waters but was a father figure to many of West
4 Oahu's youth.

5 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to honor Keaulana
6 by designating September 2nd of each year as Richard "Buffalo"
7 Keaulana Day.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 8, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
9 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
10 read as follows:

11 "§8- Richard "Buffalo" Keaulana Day. September 2 of
12 each year shall be known and recognized as "Richard "Buffalo"
13 Keaulana Day"; provided that this day is not and shall not be
14 construed to be a state holiday."

15 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

17

INTRODUCED BY:



S.B. NO. 655

Report Title:

Richard "Buffalo" Keaulana Day

Description:

Designates September 2nd of each year as "Richard "Buffalo" Keaulana Day".

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

