

MAR 07 2025

SENATE RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER 2ND AS RICHARD "BUFFALO" KEAULANA DAY.

1 WHEREAS, Richard "Buffalo" Keaulana was an iconic surfer
2 and lifesaver who was born in Honolulu on September 2, 1935, and
3 learned to surf as a young boy in the gentle rollers off
4 Waikiki; and

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6 WHEREAS, Keaulana eventually graduated to the level of
7 "beach boy" before his family settled in his home community of
8 Makaha, and Keaulana grew to be known as one of Hawaii's most
9 naturally talented surfers; and

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11 WHEREAS, his smooth style, switch-stance skills, and "nose
12 for the pocket" made him a favorite at the annual Makaha
13 International contest, an event he won in 1960; and

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15 WHEREAS, Keaulana captured six of the top-four finishes in
16 the contest between 1957 and 1965, and these achievements led
17 many to consider him the world's best bodysurfer at the time;
18 and

19
20 WHEREAS, along with his renowned surfing talent, Keaulana
21 was named Makaha's chief lifeguard in 1969, a position he held
22 for over two decades, earning him the honorary title of "Mayor
23 of Makaha" and the honor of statue of his likeness in front of
24 the Makaha library; and

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26 WHEREAS, in 1976, Keaulana was on the first voyage of the
27 Hokulea to Tahiti, acting as the voyaging canoe's steersman; and

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29 WHEREAS, his unique nickname, "Buffalo", is derived from
30 his constant connection and companionship with the water, in
31 addition to his "large head and copious amounts of hair", as his
32 friends would describe him; and

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34 WHEREAS, Keaulana was also honored with an annual surf
35 contest and beach party in his name, Buffalo's Big Board
36 Classic, which continues to be a community mainstay today; and

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1 WHEREAS, in 2010, Keaulana was inducted into the Outrigger
2 Duke Kahanamoku Foundation Hall of Fame; and

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4 WHEREAS, perhaps his greatest honor and achievement was
5 becoming the patriarch of his own West Oahu dynasty, known as
6 "Makaha's first family", currently in its third generation, with
7 two of his six children having noteworthy careers in surfing:
8 Brian, a world class waterman and big-wave surfer; and Rusty, a
9 three-time world longboard champion (1993-1995); and

10
11 WHEREAS, Richard "Buffalo" Keaulana's enduring legacy of
12 aloha has touched generations of ocean lovers and surfers
13 worldwide; and

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15 WHEREAS, as a friend and fellow beach boy of Duke
16 Kahanamoku, Keaulana's contributions to the sport of surfing and
17 Hawaiian cultural restoration are everlasting; and

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19 WHEREAS, as Makaha's first lifeguard, Keaulana's legacy
20 extends beyond surfing and his ambassadorship of aloha and he
21 not only was essential in protecting swimmers in Makaha's rough
22 waters but was a father figure to many of West Oahu's youth;
23 now, therefore,

24
25 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
26 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
27 that this body recognizes September 2 of each year as Richard
28 "Buffalo" Keaulana Day in the State of Hawaii; and

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Richard "Buffalo" Keaulana Day
31 shall not be construed as a state holiday; and

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
34 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor.

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37 OFFERED BY: 