
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

NOMINATING JOHN D. WAIHE'E III FOR INDUCTION INTO THE ALOHA ORDER
OF MERIT.

1 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III made history as the first
2 Native Hawaiian to be elected as Governor of any state in the
3 United States, serving as the fourth Governor of the State from
4 1986 to 1994; and

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6 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III's election as Governor was
7 nationally and internationally significant, representing a
8 milestone for Native Hawaiian leadership and inspiring
9 indigenous peoples across the United States and beyond; and

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11 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III distinguished himself
12 nationally and internationally by working closely with
13 presidents, governors, and foreign leaders and elevating the
14 State's role as a bridge between the United States and Asia-
15 Pacific region; and

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17 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III was chosen by his fellow
18 governors to serve as the Chair of the Democratic Governors
19 Association in 1992, placing a governor from the State in a
20 prominent national leadership role and reflecting the respect
21 and confidence of his peers during a pivotal election year; and

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23 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III also served as Chair of the
24 Education Commission of the States, through which he helped
25 shape national education policy and strengthen public education
26 systems across the country while advocating for strong federal-
27 state collaboration to support the State's schools; and

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29 WHEREAS, during the period of military downsizing and
30 economic transition in the early 1990s, John D. Waihe'e III



1 worked with federal leaders to support economic diversification,
2 workforce development, and long-term stability for the State's
3 economy; and
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5 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III implemented and advanced the
6 State's QUEST Health Care Program, an innovative Medicaid
7 managed care model designed to expand access to health care
8 coverage for low-income and working families, which received
9 national recognition as a pioneering example of effective
10 federal-state partnership in health care reform; and
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12 WHEREAS, as the first Native Hawaiian governor of any
13 state, John D. Waihe'e III brought the voice and concerns of
14 indigenous peoples into federal policy discussions, elevating
15 the State's national stature and bringing distinction and honor
16 to the State; and
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18 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III served as a delegate and
19 emerging leader at the State's Constitutional Convention of
20 1978, where he and fellow delegates championed reforms that
21 reshaped the State's government and society, including
22 establishing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, formally
23 recognizing the Hawaiian language as an official language of the
24 State, strengthening protections for natural and cultural
25 resources, and increasing government ethics and accountability,
26 demonstrating his commitment to the betterment of all people of
27 the State; and
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29 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III further advanced the national
30 dialogue on reconciliation and Native Hawaiian rights through
31 the Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission, efforts that
32 helped lay the groundwork for the 1993 Apology Resolution,
33 Public Law 103-150; and
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35 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III devoted his administration to
36 the betterment of the people of the State, promoting educational
37 opportunity, economic development, social equity, and
38 environmental stewardship; and
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40 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III continues to contribute to the
41 well-being of the State through public commentary, civic



1 engagement, and leadership in critical policy discussions,
2 including his advocacy for resilience and accountability in the
3 State's energy sector, as expressed in opinion articles
4 published in Honolulu Civil Beat in 2024 and 2025, and through
5 his ongoing promotion of the State's role as a vital bridge
6 between Pacific nations and the United States while serving as
7 Chair of the Board of Governors of the East-West Center; and
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9 WHEREAS, through his current efforts in media, opinion
10 editorials, and civic forums, John D. Waihe'e III exemplifies
11 lifelong service to the State, demonstrating that his leadership
12 did not conclude with public office but continues to uplift and
13 guide the lahui; and
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15 WHEREAS, the Legislature established the Aloha Order of
16 Merit in 1993 to honor certain individuals, and section 5-7.6,
17 Hawaii Revised Statutes, provides in relevant part that
18 "[h]onorees shall have:
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- 20 (1) Achieved national or international recognition in
21 their field either by a single event or by the
22 totality of their work that has been either pioneering
23 in their field or that has been outstanding in the
24 long-term; and
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- 26 (2) (A) Contributed to the attainment of statehood for
27 Hawaii;
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- 29 (B) Devoted themselves to the betterment of the
30 State, embodying the concept of the Aloha Spirit;
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- 32 (C) Provided extraordinary service to the State; or
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- 34 (D) Brought honor to the State"; and
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36 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III has achieved national and
37 international recognition as a statesman and advocate for the
38 State and its people through the totality of his work that has
39 been outstanding in the long term; and
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41 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III has devoted himself to the
42 betterment of the State while embodying the concept of the Aloha



1 Spirit, provided extraordinary service to the State, and brought
2 honor to the State; and

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4 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III meets all requirements
5 necessary to be inducted as a member of the Aloha Order of
6 Merit; now, therefore,

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8 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
9 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
10 of 2026, the Senate concurring, that this body nominates John D.
11 Waihe'e III for induction into the Aloha Order of Merit; and

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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
14 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, members of
15 the Aloha Order of Merit Committee, and former Governor John D.
16 Waihe'e III.

