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## HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING THE 2025 LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR, 2025 MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR, 2026 SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR NATIONAL FINALIST, 2026 LEILEHUA-MILILANI-WAIALUA COMPLEX AREA TEACHER OF THE YEAR, AND 2026 'AIEA-MOANALUA-RADFORD COMPLEX AREA TEACHER OF THE YEAR.

1           WHEREAS, MATTHEW BROWN was recently named the 2025  
2 Librarian of the Year; and

3  
4           WHEREAS, after completing a distinguished twenty-six-year  
5 career in the United States Navy, MATTHEW BROWN followed in the  
6 footsteps of his family members and pursued a career as a  
7 librarian; and

8  
9           WHEREAS, MATTHEW BROWN joined the Hawai'i State Public  
10 Library System, working at the Wahiawā Public Library before  
11 being appointed as District Administrator, a role that required  
12 him to oversee twenty-four library branches across O'ahu and  
13 Hawai'i Island; he would hold this position for several years  
14 before moving on to become Managing Librarian at the Hawai'i  
15 State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled; and

16  
17           WHEREAS, throughout his tenure, MATTHEW BROWN has helped to  
18 ensure that patrons are provided access to library services in a  
19 timely manner; with a core belief that access to libraries is  
20 fundamental to our society, he has worked tirelessly on outreach  
21 activities to promote the State's network of public libraries,  
22 including helping to grow the Hawai'i State Library for the Blind  
23 and Print Disabled's book club; and

24  
25           WHEREAS, through his expertise, leadership, and commitment  
26 to accessible learning, MATTHEW BROWN has become a trusted and  
27 beloved figure at the library, creating a welcoming environment



1 for library patrons who depend on its resources and services;  
2 and

3

4 WHEREAS, MATTHEW BROWN's passion for his work is not  
5 limited to merely fulfilling his everyday job duties; he takes  
6 the initiative to anticipate and address the needs of the blind  
7 and print disabled community through continued professional  
8 development, including researching new advances in braille and  
9 audio technology, to further support an inclusive learning  
10 environment; and

11

12 WHEREAS, JACQUELYN MCCANDLESS was recently named the 2025  
13 Middle School Principal of the Year; and

14

15 WHEREAS, with nearly twenty-five years of experience as an  
16 administrator, JACQUELYN MCCANDLESS is the Principal of Maui  
17 Waena Intermediate School, where she is renowned for her  
18 collaborative leadership style that actively engages students,  
19 staff, and families in school decision making; she has empowered  
20 them to think and act like stakeholders, ensuring that all  
21 voices are heard, joint decisions are made, and collective  
22 action plans are created and implemented; and

23

24 WHEREAS, JACQUELYN MCCANDLESS has allowed students to take  
25 ownership of events such as the school's Family Fun Nights, with  
26 students planning the activities, creating promotional  
27 materials, and managing concessions; and

28

29 WHEREAS, JACQUELYN MCCANDLESS has also played a key role in  
30 establishing a popular esports elective on campus, providing  
31 students with a new avenue for connection, creativity, and skill  
32 development by securing funding, classroom space, and an  
33 additional teacher to support the program; and

34

35 WHEREAS, noted for her deep personal investment in the  
36 well-being of her students, JACQUELYN MCCANDLESS is visible and  
37 engaged on campus, checking in with students during lunch,  
38 assisting families, and supporting her staff; her  
39 approachability and care for her school community have helped to  
40 establish a welcoming and inclusive environment to enable  
41 students to achieve their full potential; and



1  
2 WHEREAS, LEKA ANITEMA was recently selected as a 2026  
3 School Counselor of the Year national finalist; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, as the post-high counselor at Maui High School in  
6 Kahului, LEKA ANITEMA has been selected as a finalist for the  
7 national 2026 School Counselor of the Year Award by the American  
8 School Counselor Association, serving as a testament to her  
9 outstanding work and tireless dedication to helping her students  
10 thrive, both inside and outside the classroom, and fulfill their  
11 highest potential; and  
12

13 WHEREAS, LEKA ANITEMA holds a bachelor's degree in TESOL  
14 education from Brigham Young University-Hawaii, while minoring  
15 in psychology and theatrical arts, and also earned  
16 certifications in school counseling and educational leadership;  
17 and  
18

19 WHEREAS, throughout her career, LEKA ANITEMA has  
20 prioritized the establishment of schoolwide and community  
21 partnerships that leverage the strengths of each partner to  
22 connect students with resources and mentors; she collaborates  
23 extensively with colleagues to deliver schoolwide rollouts and  
24 tailored sessions based on identified classroom needs,  
25 demonstrating the critical role of school counselors in shaping  
26 student futures; and  
27

28 WHEREAS, renowned for her unwavering commitment to  
29 empowering students and helping them explore opportunities after  
30 they graduate, LEKA ANITEMA initiated Maui County's first  
31 Hawai'i-based college fair and also spearheaded Maui County's  
32 first senior hiring event, successfully connecting students from  
33 three islands with dozens of potential employers offering  
34 livable wages; and  
35

36 WHEREAS, CHRISTOPHER JUSTO was recently named the 2026  
37 Leilehua-Mililani-Waiialua Complex Area Teacher of the Year; and  
38

39 WHEREAS, a dedicated and passionate educator, CHRISTOPHER  
40 JUSTO has served for twenty-six years as an agriculture teacher



1 at Mililani Middle School in the Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua  
2 Complex Area; and

3  
4 WHEREAS, known for bringing learning to life, CHRISTOPHER  
5 JUSTO creates interdisciplinary and real-world experiences  
6 through programs that incorporate greenhouses, hydroponics,  
7 aquaponics, and composting, as well as partnerships that support  
8 watershed forest restoration in the Wai'anae Mountains; these  
9 efforts have inspired students of all backgrounds and abilities  
10 to reflect on the importance of sustainable agricultural  
11 practices and preserving Hawai'i's precious natural resources;  
12 and

13  
14 WHEREAS, committed to helping his students continue  
15 learning outside the classroom, CHRISTOPHER JUSTO is known for  
16 taking students on parent-approved mini excursions on his days  
17 off to learn about Hawai'i's natural environment firsthand; and

18  
19 WHEREAS, as a result of his exceptional efforts to spark  
20 the intellectual curiosity of his students and motivate them to  
21 achieve their highest potential, CHRISTOPHER JUSTO has been  
22 honored as the 2026 Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua Complex Area  
23 Teacher of the Year; and

24  
25 WHEREAS, EMILY MENDOZA was recently named the 2026 'Aiea-  
26 Moanalua-Radford Complex Area Teacher of the Year; and

27  
28 WHEREAS, after earning her license and beginning her career  
29 as a teacher in 2018, EMILY MENDOZA has grown to become a  
30 distinguished culinary arts instructor at 'Aiea High School; and

31  
32 WHEREAS, EMILY MENDOZA's interactive lessons challenge  
33 students to practice critical thinking, communication, and  
34 collaboration skills to solve real-world problems; in addition,  
35 she provides her students with mentorship opportunities with  
36 industry professionals, allowing them extra opportunities to  
37 learn valuable skills and network; and

38  
39 WHEREAS, EMILY MENDOZA encourages her students to develop  
40 the skills necessary to succeed outside the classroom walls



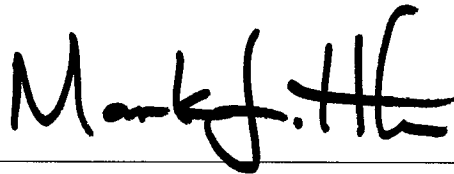
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1 through activities such as bake sales, cooking competitions, and  
2 catering events that bridge the gap between classroom learning  
3 and workplace experiences; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, renowned for her generous and compassionate  
6 spirit, EMILY MENDOZA has even helped support blood drives by  
7 leading her students in baking iron-rich food to replenish and  
8 reenergize volunteers who have donated blood; she is always  
9 excited to share her baking tips, ideas for future fundraisers,  
10 and opportunities for student engagement; now, therefore,  
11

12 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
13 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session  
14 of 2026, that this body hereby congratulates MATTHEW BROWN for  
15 being named the 2025 Librarian of the Year, JACQUELYN MCCANDLESS  
16 for being named the 2025 Middle School Principal of the Year,  
17 LEKA ANITEMA for being selected as a 2026 School Counselor of  
18 the Year national finalist, CHRISTOPHER JUSTO for being named  
19 the 2026 Leilehua-Mililani-Waiialua Complex Area Teacher of the  
20 Year, and EMILY MENDOZA for being named the 2026 'Aiea-Moanalua-  
21 Radford Complex Area Teacher of the Year and extends to them its  
22 warmest aloha and best wishes for continued success in all  
23 future endeavors.  
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25  
26

OFFERED BY: \_\_\_\_\_



MAR 18 2026

