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# HOUSE 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  
31 worked with federal leaders to support economic diversification,  
32 workforce development, and long-term stability for the State's  
33 economy; and



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2 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III implemented and advanced the  
3 State's QUEST Health Care Program, an innovative Medicaid  
4 managed care model designed to expand access to health care  
5 coverage for low-income and working families, which received  
6 national recognition as a pioneering example of effective  
7 federal-state partnership in health care reform; and  
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9 WHEREAS, as the first Native Hawaiian governor of any  
10 state, John D. Waihe'e III brought the voice and concerns of  
11 indigenous peoples into federal policy discussions, elevating  
12 the State's national stature and bringing distinction and honor  
13 to the State; and  
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15 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III served as a delegate and  
16 emerging leader at the State's Constitutional Convention of  
17 1978, where he and fellow delegates championed reforms that  
18 reshaped the State's government and society, including  
19 establishing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, formally  
20 recognizing the Hawaiian language as an official language of the  
21 State, strengthening protections for natural and cultural  
22 resources, and increasing government ethics and accountability,  
23 demonstrating his commitment to the betterment of all people of  
24 the State; and  
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26 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III further advanced the national  
27 dialogue on reconciliation and Native Hawaiian rights through  
28 the Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission, efforts that  
29 helped lay the groundwork for the 1993 Apology Resolution,  
30 Public Law 103-150; and  
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32 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III devoted his administration to  
33 the betterment of the people of the State, promoting educational  
34 opportunity, economic development, social equity, and  
35 environmental stewardship; and  
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37 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III continues to contribute to the  
38 well-being of the State through public commentary, civic  
39 engagement, and leadership in critical policy discussions,  
40 including his advocacy for resilience and accountability in the  
41 State's energy sector, as expressed in opinion articles



1 published in Honolulu Civil Beat in 2024 and 2025, and through  
2 his ongoing promotion of the State's role as a vital bridge  
3 between Pacific nations and the United States while serving as  
4 Chair of the Board of Governors of the East-West Center; and  
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6 WHEREAS, through his current efforts in media, opinion  
7 editorials, and civic forums, John D. Waihe'e III exemplifies  
8 lifelong service to the State, demonstrating that his leadership  
9 did not conclude with public office but continues to uplift and  
10 guide the lahui; and  
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12 WHEREAS, the Legislature established the Aloha Order of  
13 Merit in 1993 to honor certain individuals, and section 5-7.6,  
14 Hawaii Revised Statutes, provides in relevant part that  
15 "[h]onorees shall have:  
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- 17 (1) Achieved national or international recognition in  
18 their field either by a single event or by the  
19 totality of their work that has been either pioneering  
20 in their field or that has been outstanding in the  
21 long-term; and  
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- 23 (2) (A) Contributed to the attainment of statehood for  
24 Hawaii;  
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- 26 (B) Devoted themselves to the betterment of the  
27 State, embodying the concept of the Aloha Spirit;  
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- 29 (C) Provided extraordinary service to the State; or  
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- 31 (D) Brought honor to the State"; and  
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33 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III has achieved national and  
34 international recognition as a statesman and advocate for the  
35 State and its people through the totality of his work that has  
36 been outstanding in the long term; and  
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38 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III has devoted himself to the  
39 betterment of the State while embodying the concept of the Aloha  
40 Spirit, provided extraordinary service to the State, and brought  
41 honor to the State; and  
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1           WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III meets all requirements  
2 necessary to be inducted as a member of the Aloha Order of  
3 Merit; now, therefore,  
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5           BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
6 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
7 of 2026, that this body nominates John D. Waihe'e III for  
8 induction into the Aloha Order of Merit; and  
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10           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
11 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, members of the Aloha  
12 Order of Merit Committee, and former Governor John D. Waihe'e  
13 III.

