

MAR 16 2026

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## SENATE 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

10  
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 the Asia-  
15 Pacific region; and

16  
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

22  
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

28  
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

34



1           WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III implemented and advanced the  
2 State's QUEST health care program, an innovative Medicaid  
3 managed care model designed to expand access to health coverage  
4 for low-income and working families, which received national  
5 recognition as a pioneering example of effective federal-state  
6 partnership in health care reform; and  
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8           WHEREAS, as the first Native Hawaiian governor of any  
9 state, John D. Waihe'e III brought the voice and concerns of  
10 indigenous peoples into federal policy discussions, elevating  
11 the State's national stature and bringing distinction and honor  
12 to the State; and  
13

14           WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III served as a delegate and  
15 emerging leader at the State's Constitutional Convention of  
16 1978, where he and fellow delegates championed reforms that  
17 reshaped the State's government and society, including  
18 establishing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, formally  
19 recognizing the Hawaiian language as an official language of the  
20 State, strengthening protections for natural and cultural  
21 resources, and increasing government ethics and accountability,  
22 demonstrating his commitment to the betterment of all the people  
23 of the State; and  
24

25           WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III further advanced the national  
26 dialogue on reconciliation and Native Hawaiian rights through  
27 the Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission, efforts that  
28 helped lay the groundwork for the 1993 Apology Resolution,  
29 Public Law 103-150; and  
30

31           WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III devoted his administration to  
32 the betterment of the people of the State, promoting educational  
33 opportunity, economic development, social equity, and  
34 environmental stewardship; and  
35

36           WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III continues to contribute to the  
37 well-being of the State through public commentary, civic  
38 engagement, and leadership in critical policy discussions,  
39 including his advocacy for resilience and accountability in the  
40 State's energy sector, as expressed in opinion articles  
41 published in Honolulu Civil Beat in 2024 and 2025, and through



1 his ongoing promotion of the State's role as a vital bridge  
2 between Pacific nations and the United States while serving as  
3 Chair of the Board of Governors of the East-West Center; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, through his current efforts in media, opinion  
6 editorials, and civic forums, John D. Waihe'e III exemplifies  
7 lifelong service to the State, demonstrating that his leadership  
8 did not conclude with public office but continues to uplift and  
9 guide the lahui; and  
10

11 WHEREAS, the Legislature established the Aloha Order of  
12 Merit in 1993 to honor certain individuals, and section 5-7.6,  
13 Hawaii Revised Statutes, provides in relevant part that  
14 "[h]onorees shall have:  
15

- 16 (1) Achieved national or international recognition in  
17 their field either by a single event or by the  
18 totality of their work that has been either pioneering  
19 in their field or that has been outstanding in the  
20 long-term; and  
21  
22 (2) (A) Contributed to the attainment of statehood for  
23 Hawaii;  
24  
25 (B) Devoted themselves to the betterment of the  
26 State, embodying the concept of the Aloha Spirit;  
27  
28 (C) Provided extraordinary service to the State; or  
29  
30 (D) Brought honor to the State"; and  
31

32 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III has achieved national and  
33 international recognition as a statesman and advocate for the  
34 State and its people through the totality of his work that has  
35 been outstanding in the long-term; and  
36

37 WHEREAS, John D. Waihe'e III has devoted himself to the  
38 betterment of the State while embodying the concept of the Aloha  
39 Spirit, provided extraordinary service to the State, and brought  
40 honor to the State; and  
41



# S.R. NO. 110

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 Senate of the Thirty-third  
6 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,  
7 that this body nominates John D. Waihe'e III for induction into  
8 the Aloha Order of Merit; and  
9

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
11 Resolution be transmitted to the members of the Aloha Order of  
12 Merit Committee, Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of  
13 the House of Representatives, and former Governor John D. Waihe'e  
14 III.  
15  
16  
17

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

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and appears to be the name of the person offering the resolution.