

MAR 10 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

ESTABLISHING A SISTER-STATE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF
HAWAII, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND THE PREFECTURE OF
OKAYAMA, JAPAN.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii has had a multicultural population since
2 the days of the Hawaiian monarchy in the 19th century and
3 maintains a heritage of international participation and cultural
4 sensitivity unparalleled in other states; and
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6 WHEREAS, since 1981, the Legislature has instituted
7 sister-state relationships as a means of asserting the State's
8 active participation in international matters; and
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10 WHEREAS, Hawaii currently maintains nineteen sister-state
11 relationships, including relationships with six of Japan's
12 forty-seven prefectures; and
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14 WHEREAS, Okayama is a prefecture in Japan's Chugoku region
15 on the Seto Inland Sea coast of Honshu Island; and
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17 WHEREAS, Hawaii and Okayama share long-standing historical,
18 cultural, and people-to-people ties rooted in Japanese
19 immigration to Hawaii and ongoing cultural exchanges; and
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21 WHEREAS, these ties were formally organized as early as
22 1927 with the establishment of the Hawaii Okayama Kenjinkai, an
23 organization that continues to foster friendship and heritage to
24 this day; and
25

26 WHEREAS, Japan remains one of Hawaii's most important
27 international partners in tourism, trade, education, and
28 cultural exchanges, and Okayama Prefecture is widely recognized
29 for its leadership in high-quality agriculture, manufacturing,
30 education, and sustainability; and
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32 WHEREAS, Okayama is known as the "Land of Sunshine," or
33 *Hare no Kuni*, due to its mild climate and low rainfall, a
34 distinction that has allowed it to become a premier agricultural



1 region renowned for white peaches, muscat grapes, and
2 high-quality rice; and
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4 WHEREAS, Hawaii and the people of Okayama share a unique
5 historical bond dating back to 1868 with the arrival of the
6 *Gannenmono*, the first group of Japanese immigrants to Hawaii,
7 which included Sentaro Ishii, a samurai from Okayama who settled
8 on the island of Maui and became a prominent centenarian and
9 community leader; and
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11 WHEREAS, grassroots relationships have flourished for
12 decades, including the sister-chapter relationship established
13 in 1985 between the Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce
14 and the Kurashiki, Kojima, and Tamashima Junior Chamber
15 International chapters in Okayama; and
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17 WHEREAS, Okayama Prefecture has demonstrated a strong
18 commitment to direct exchange, having successfully operated
19 fifty-two charter flights carrying more than twelve thousand
20 passengers between Okayama Airport and Honolulu from 1991 to
21 2018; and
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23 WHEREAS, both jurisdictions share common priorities,
24 including sustainable tourism, workforce development, food
25 security, clean energy, climate resilience, and the preservation
26 of cultural heritage; and
27

28 WHEREAS, educational exchanges have already flourished at
29 the university level between Okayama University and the
30 University of Hawaii at Manoa, and both regions express a strong
31 desire to expand these opportunities to the high school level;
32 and
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34 WHEREAS, pursuant to section 229-3, Hawaii Revised
35 Statutes, the Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships
36 Commission is tasked with evaluating and developing
37 recommendations for the initiation of all sister-state
38 relationships, and forwarding its recommendations to the
39 Legislature for the Legislature to implement, if it so chooses,
40 by either adopting a concurrent resolution or by enacting
41 session law to that effect; and
42



1 WHEREAS, a relationship between Hawaii and Okayama will
2 strengthen institutional collaboration, economic opportunity,
3 and cultural exchanges for the benefit of residents, businesses,
4 students, and communities in both regions; and

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6 WHEREAS, a relationship between Hawaii and Okayama is
7 expected to expand economic and trade opportunities for local
8 businesses; strengthen sustainable tourism; support workforce
9 development; enhance food security and agricultural innovation;
10 and deepen cultural understanding; and

11
12 WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii is actively seeking to expand
13 its international ties and has an abiding interest in developing
14 goodwill, friendship, and economic relations between the people
15 of Hawaii and the people of many nations; and

16
17 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Sister-State and International
18 Partnerships Commission has reviewed the Hawaii-Okayama
19 sister-state application and recommended that a sister-state
20 relationship be established between Hawaii and Okayama; and

21
22 WHEREAS, this body believes that a sister-state
23 relationship between Hawaii and Okayama will be highly
24 beneficial in expanding tourism, strengthening cultural bonds,
25 and advancing common goals of international peace and
26 cooperation; now, therefore,

27
28 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
29 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
30 that a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii,
31 United States of America, and the Prefecture of Okayama, Japan,
32 is hereby established; and



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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the United States Secretary of
3 State; Ambassador of the Embassy of Japan in Washington, D.C.;
4 Governor of the Prefecture of Okayama, Japan; Consul General of
5 Japan in Hawaii; Governor of the State of Hawaii; Director of
6 Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; and Chairperson of
7 the Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships
8 Commission.
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OFFERED BY:



