

ACT 68

S.B. NO. 1035

A Bill for an Act Relating to Makahiki Day Commemoration.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. Makahiki was a significant time throughout Polynesia. The rising of the makalii, Pleiades, marks the beginning of the Makahiki season that covers four consecutive months. Conflict and war were set aside and unity and peace prevailed as the people paid tribute to the god Lono.

After harvesting their crops, the people rested and let the land lay fallow. Food was offered in tribute to the chiefs and Lono in thanks for their wise stewardship because without wisdom, the land would become barren.

A white tapa banner that symbolized Lono made the circuit of the island. In 1778, Captain James Cook sailed into Kealahou Bay, also known as the path of God. His arrival coincided with the Makahiki Observance. The sails of his ship resembled the symbol of Lono. According to Hawaiian tradition, one day Lono would return. Thus, the people welcomed Captain James Cook as Lono. However, a seemingly minor incident led from the deification of Captain James Cook to his demise and changed the course of history forever.

To perpetuate the ancient wisdom of land conservation, abundance, unity, and peace during the four months of Makahiki, Polynesian regional governments celebrate the Makahiki season and have designated November 20th as the start of the Makahiki observance. Groups from Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, New Zealand or Aotearoa, Easter Island or Rapa Nui, Wallis and Futuna, and the Marquesas Islands all gather in Tahiti to celebrate Matahiti Tau Auhune, a time of harvest.

SECTION 2. Chapter 8, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§8- Makahiki Commemoration Day. November 20th of each year shall be known and designated as Makahiki Commemoration Day. This day shall not be construed as a state holiday.”

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon approval.

(Approved May 13, 2008.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.