

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 546

Designating February 2024 as “Hawaiian Language Month” or “‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 8 (legislative day, FEBRUARY 7), 2024

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Ms. HIRONO) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating February 2024 as “Hawaiian Language Month”
or “‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Month”.

Whereas the Hawaiian language, or ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i—

(1) is the Native language of Native Hawaiians, the
aboriginal, Indigenous people who—

(A) settled the Hawaiian archipelago as early as
300 A.D., over which they exercised sovereignty; and

(B) over time, founded the Kingdom of Hawai‘i;
and

(2) was once widely spoken by Native Hawaiians
and non-Native Hawaiians throughout the Kingdom of
Hawai‘i, which held one of the highest literacy rates in
the world prior to the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom
of Hawai‘i in 1893 and the establishment of the Republic
of Hawai‘i;

Whereas the Republic of Hawai‘i enacted a law in 1896 effectively banning school instruction in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, which led to the near extinction of the language by the 1980s when fewer than 50 fluent speakers under 18 years old remained;

Whereas, since the 1960s, Native Hawaiians have led a grassroots revitalization of their Native language, launching a number of historic initiatives, including—

- (1) ‘Aha Pūnana Leo’s Hawaiian language immersion preschools;
- (2) the Hawaiian language immersion program of the Hawai‘i State Department of Education; and
- (3) the Hawaiian language programs of the University of Hawai‘i system;

Whereas the Hawaiian language revitalization movement inspired systemic Native language policy reform, including—

- (1) the State of Hawai‘i recognizing ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i as an official language in the Constitution of the State of Hawai‘i in 1978;
- (2) the State of Hawai‘i removing the 90-year ban on teaching ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i in public and private schools in 1986;
- (3) the enactment of the Native American Languages Act (25 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.) in 1990, which established the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages; and
- (4) the State of Hawai‘i designating the month of February as “‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Month” to celebrate and encourage the use of the Hawaiian language; and

Whereas the enactment of the Native American Language Resource Center Act of 2022 (20 U.S.C. 6301 note; Public Law 117–335) in 2023—

(1) reconfirmed a Federal commitment to revitalizing Indigenous languages, including the Hawaiian language; and

(2) resulted in the Department of Education awarding the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo a 5-year grant to establish the first National Native American Language Resource Center: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates February 2024 as “Hawaiian
3 Language Month” or “‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Month”;

4 (2) commits to preserving, protecting, and pro-
5 moting the use, practice, and development of ‘Ōlelo
6 Hawai‘i in alignment with the Native American Lan-
7 guages Act (25 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.); and

8 (3) urges the people of the United States and
9 interested groups to celebrate ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Month
10 with appropriate activities and programs to dem-
11 onstrate support for ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i.

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