

ACKNOWLEDGING AND HONORING BRAVE YOUNG MEN FROM HAWAII  
WHO ENABLED THE UNITED STATES TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN JU-  
RISDICTION IN REMOTE EQUATORIAL ISLANDS AS PROLONGED CON-  
FLICT IN THE PACIFIC LED TO WORLD WAR II

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SEPTEMBER 6, 2016.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

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Mr. BISHOP of Utah, from the Committee on Natural Resources,  
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H. Res. 169]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the resolution (H. Res. 169) acknowledging and honoring brave young men from Hawaii who enabled the United States to establish and maintain jurisdiction in remote equatorial islands as prolonged conflict in the Pacific led to World War II, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the resolution be agreed to.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of House Resolution 169 is to acknowledge and honor brave young men from Hawaii who enabled the United States to establish and maintain jurisdiction in remote equatorial islands as prolonged conflict in the Pacific led to World War II.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The United States first began establishing its presence in the Equatorial Pacific during the mid-19th century through guano<sup>1</sup> mining conducted by private American companies under the Guano Islands Act (48 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.). After several decades, guano resources became depleted, leading to the diminishing presence of American companies on the equatorial Pacific islands, leaving them vulnerable to development and claim by other world nations, especially the regional rival, Imperial Japan. The United States still maintained a desire for military and commercial air routes between Australia and California, air routes that would be facilitated by the use of Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands. In 1935, the Depart-

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<sup>1</sup>Guano is the excrement of seabirds, cave-dwelling bats, pinnipeds or birds in general and is a highly effective fertilizer due to its high concentration of nitrogen, phosphate and potassium.

ment of Commerce developed a clandestine colonization plan with the objective of placing U.S. citizens on the remote islands for the United States to lay claim to them. The colonization program called for non-active military personnel, to avoid conflicting with international law regarding colonization by military.

In March 1935, the U.S. government enlisted the help of native Hawaiians, graduates of the Kamehameha School for Boys, as well as furloughed Army personnel to establish the remote colonies necessary to lay claim to these islands in the equatorial Pacific. The native Hawaiian men were all skilled fishermen, expert swimmers and boatmen, and were willing to undertake the requested mission with discipline and optimism, making them the ideal candidates for the colonization program. By June 1935, the furloughed army personnel had been ordered off the islands and replaced by more graduates of the Kamehameha School, leaving only the native Hawaiian volunteers to maintain U.S. presence on the three remote islands. Daily tasks of the colonists included recording weather conditions, cultivating plants, maintaining daily activities logs, recording local fish and fauna, and collecting biological specimens for museum research.

After a year-long occupation of the islands by these men, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 7368, proclaiming that the islands of Howland, Baker and Jarvis were officially under the jurisdiction of the United States. Administration of these remote islands was granted to the Department of the Interior, with an emphasis on weather data and radio communication as the primary objectives of the colonists. In 1938, the U.S. colonized the islands of Canton and Enderbury with the objectives of furthering commercial aviation interest, and expanded the colonization program to include these two islands.

By 1940, the Navy acknowledged a desire to maintain these remote islands for strategic military positions against the threat of the Imperial Japanese fleet. On December 8, 1941, Howland Island was attacked by a fleet of Japanese bombers, killing Hawaiian colonists Joseph Keliihanui and Richard Whaley. The other islands were also subsequently attacked by Japanese submarine and aircraft fleets, although fortunately resulting in no further casualties to American colonists on the islands. Unaware of the attacks on the remote islands of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis by the Japanese and distracted by the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Navy did not rescue the remaining colonists until the beginning of February 1942. The colonization project lasted a total of 7 years in which time over 130 men volunteered for the project, a significant majority of them being native Hawaiians. In July 1943, a military base was established on Baker Island and played a substantial role in the Tarawa-Makin operation, a significant U.S. offensive against the Japanese fleet in the Pacific theatre.

In 1956, the participants of the colonization project established an organization to preserve the fellowship of their group, naming it "Hui Panala'au." In 1974, the islands of Howland, Baker and Jarvis were designated as National Wildlife Refuges and are now part of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. The islands of Canton and Enderbury became part of the Republic of Kiribati.

Concerns have been raised by the author of House Resolution 169 that the U.S. Government has never formally acknowledged or thanked the men or their families for their sacrifices through service in the equatorial islands colonization program. With only one remaining member of the original Hui Panala'au colonists still living, there is some urgency to pass this resolution.

In the 112th Congress, Congresswoman Colleen W. Hanabusa (D–HI) introduced a similar resolution (H. Res. 388) that was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources. No action was taken on the bill. No similar resolution was introduced during the 113th Congress.

#### COMMITTEE ACTION

House Resolution 169 was introduced on March 24, 2015, by Congressman Mark Takai (D–HI). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs. On June 14, 2016, the Natural Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee was discharged by unanimous consent. No amendments were offered and the resolution was adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent on June 15, 2016.

#### COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of Rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of Rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

#### COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. Cost of Legislation. Clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out this bill. This resolution acknowledges certain accomplishments, recognizes the dedication of certain individuals, extends condolences, honors certain individuals and extends the appreciation of the House of Representatives. Given its nature, this resolution incurs no cost on the part of the federal government.

2. Section 308(a) of Congressional Budget Act. As required by clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, this bill does not contain any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

3. General Performance Goals and Objectives. As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this bill is to acknowledge and honor brave young men from Hawaii who enabled the United States to establish and maintain jurisdiction in remote equatorial islands as prolonged conflict in the Pacific lead to World War II.

#### EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e),

9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 104-4

This bill contains no unfunded mandates.

COMPLIANCE WITH H. RES. 5

Directed Rule Making. The Chairman does not believe that this bill directs any executive branch official to conduct any specific rule-making proceedings.

Duplication of Existing Programs. This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111-139 or identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95-220, as amended by Public Law 98-169) as relating to other programs.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

This bill is not intended to preempt any State, local or tribal law.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes in existing law.