

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 29

Recognizing the 125th anniversary of organized Okinawan immigration to the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 9, 2025

Ms. TOKUDA (for herself, Mr. CASE, and Ms. SÁNCHEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the 125th anniversary of organized Okinawan immigration to the United States.

Whereas, on January 8, 1900, 26 contract laborers from the island of Okinawa led by Mr. Kyuzo Toyama arrived in Honolulu, Hawai'i, aboard the S.S. City of China, marking the first organized immigration of Okinawan people to the United States;

Whereas the first Okinawan to arrive in the United States was Mr. Keizo Kawatsu, who arrived in the United States in 1889 through Vancouver, Canada, passing through Los Angeles, California, before settling in Phoenix, Arizona;

Whereas the territory of Hawai'i was a major destination for organized Okinawan migration in a diaspora that has

since extended across North America, South America, and beyond;

Whereas there is estimated to be over 100,000 people of Okinawan descent living in the United States, with approximately half of that number residing in the State of Hawai'i;

Whereas the Okinawan community has made significant contributions to government, business, the military, education, and other sectors in the United States;

Whereas, during the Second World War, American soldiers of Okinawan heritage fought bravely alongside Japanese American nisei soldiers in the 442d Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 552d Field Artillery Battalion, and the Military Intelligence Service;

Whereas, during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, servicemembers of Okinawan heritage in the Military Intelligence Service engaged in life-saving translation and interpretation services to convince the local population to surrender to United States forces, allowing the distribution of humanitarian aid to the local population that had suffered greatly during the war;

Whereas to provide further humanitarian aid to Okinawa following the Second World War, Okinawan Americans gathered donations and worked with the United States military to deliver shipments of clothes, medicine, school supplies, and livestock to Okinawa;

Whereas Okinawan Americans have established community cultural organizations to promote collaboration and diversity across the country, including in over 50 Okinawan Kenjinkai organizations in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawai'i, Illinois,

Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and the District of Columbia;

Whereas Okinawan Americans have held top positions in government, business, the military, and education, including—

(1) the Honorable David Ige, former Governor of the State of Hawai'i, the first Okinawan American elected Governor of a United States State;

(2) General (ret.) Paul Nakasone, former Commander of United States Cyber Command and former Director of the National Security Agency, the first four-star General of Okinawan ancestry;

(3) Mr. Keith Hayashi, Superintendent of the Hawai'i State Department of Education;

(4) Mr. David Roberts, Manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers, the first Manager of Asian heritage to lead a team to the World Series and to a World Series title;

(5) Mr. Mark Taira, Chief Executive Officer and President of King's Hawaiian Bakery;

(6) Mr. Roy Yamaguchi, celebrity chef and restaurateur;

(7) Ms. Lynne Yoshiko Nakasone, Okinawan dance performer, choreographer, and instructor recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts as a National Heritage Fellow in 2012;

(8) Mr. Jake Shimabukuro, ukulele virtuoso and composer; and

(9) Ms. Tamilyn Tomita, actress;

Whereas Okinawan Americans have perpetuated their unique cultural identity, history, and indigenous languages as

recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);

Whereas Okinawa is the birthplace of karate, and Okinawan immigrants introduced and spread the martial art and its distinct styles, including Shorin-Ryu, Goju-Ryu, Uechi-Ryu, and Shito-Ryu, to Hawai'i, the United States, and the world;

Whereas the year 2025 also marks the anniversary of many sister-State and sister-city relationships between Okinawa and the United States, including—

- (1) the 40th anniversary of the Hawai'i-Okinawa Sister State Relationship;
- (2) the 65th anniversary of the Honolulu-Naha Sister City Relationship;
- (3) the 62d anniversary of the Kauai County-Ishigaki Sister City Relationship;
- (4) the 60th anniversary of the Maui County-Miyakojima Sister City Relationship;
- (5) the 39th anniversary of the Hawai'i County-Nago Sister City Relationship;
- (6) the 23d anniversary of the Lakewood, Washington-Okinawa City Sister City Relationship;
- (7) the 14th anniversary of the Hawai'i County-Kumejima Sister City Relationship;
- (8) the 12th anniversary of the Redondo Beach, California-Itoman City Sister City Relationship; and
- (9) the 5th anniversary of the Honolulu-Kin Friendship Agreement; and

Whereas Okinawan Americans will continue to perpetuate and share their unique cultural identity and heritage and foster deeper relationships between the peoples of Okinawa and the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the 125th anniversary of Oki-
3 nawan immigration to the United States and the
4 historic contributions of Okinawan Americans to the
5 Nation;

6 (2) reaffirms the unique cultural and people-to-
7 people ties between the United States and Okinawa;
8 and

9 (3) urges the people of the United States to
10 honor the 125th anniversary of Okinawan immigra-
11 tion to the United States with appropriate programs
12 and activities.

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