

Hispanic American. Antonio Villaraigosa said:

I was offended by the idea of a national anthem in another language because for me the national anthem is something that deserves respect. Without question the vast majority of people in the United States were offended, as well. Our anthem should be spoken English.

So says New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, a Hispanic American, who said on the "CBS Early Show" last week:

I agree. The national anthem should be in English. Most immigrants want to become American. They want to learn English. They want to be part of the American mainstream.

Twelve cosponsoring Senators agree. Many Democrats in the House of Representatives have joined as cosponsors. Senator CONRAD from North Dakota spoke on this in the Senate last week and said:

A common language is absolutely essential to our Nation. I look to our neighbors to the north [meaning Canada] and see incredible traumas they have been through because they are speaking in two different languages. My own strong belief is we ought to say the pledge in English and sing the national anthem in English.

Ramon Cisneros, the publisher of a Spanish language newspaper in Nashville, e-mailed me:

Thank you for the resolution. Our common language as Americans is and will always be English. Our national symbol should always be said and sung in English.

We have worked hard to make English our common language, creating common schools, requiring new citizens to learn English to the eighth grade level. The Senate last week passed grants to help prospective citizens learn English. We welcome legal immigrants to this country. But we expect they will become American, that they will learn our common language, English, that they will learn our history, that they will subscribe to our values as found in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and when they became citizens, they will renounce allegiance to their former government and swear allegiance to our laws and Constitution. That is what holds us together as the United States of America.

So I am glad, in conclusion, that as the Senate stood together for our economic identity as Americans, it did it unanimously and passed our resolution affirming that statements of national unity, including the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem, should be said or sung in our common language, English.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

NATIVE HAWAIIAN GOVERNMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about an issue of significant importance to the people of Hawaii, S. 147, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2005.

While opponents of this legislation have sought to characterize this issue as a Native versus non-Native issue, I am here to tell you that there is nothing further from the truth. This bill is important to all of the people of Hawaii.

Why? It is significant because it provides a process, a structured process, for the people of Hawaii to finally address longstanding issues resulting from a dark period in Hawaii's history, the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii. The people of Hawaii are multicultural and we celebrate our diversity. At the same time, we all share a common respect and desire to preserve the culture and tradition of Hawaii's indigenous peoples, Native Hawaiians.

Despite this perceived harmony, there are issues stemming from the overthrow that we have not been able to address due to apprehension over the emotions that arise when these matters are discussed. There has been no structured process. Instead, there has been fear as to what the discussion would entail, causing people to avoid the issues. Such behavior has led to high levels of anger and frustration as well as misunderstandings between Native Hawaiians and non-Native Hawaiians.

As a young child, I was discouraged from speaking Hawaiian because I was told that it would not allow me to succeed in the Western world. My parents lived through the overthrow and endured the aftermath as a time when all things Hawaiian, including language, which they both spoke fluently, hula, custom, and tradition, were viewed as negative. I, therefore, was discouraged from speaking the language and practicing Hawaiian customs and traditions. I was the youngest of eight children. I remember as a young child sneaking to listen to my parents so that I could maintain my ability to understand the Hawaiian language. My experience mirrors that of my generation of Hawaiians.

While my generation learned to accept what was ingrained into us by our parents, my children have had the advantage of growing up during the Hawaiian renaissance, a period of revival for Hawaiian language, custom, and tradition. Benefiting from this revival are my grandchildren who can speak Hawaiian and know so much more about our history.

It is this generation, however, that is growing impatient with the lack of progress in efforts to resolve longstanding issues. It is this generation that does not understand why we have not resolved these matters. It is for this generation that I have written this bill to ensure that we have a way to address these emotional issues.

There are those who have tried to say that my bill will divide the people of Hawaii. As I have just explained, my bill goes a long way to unite the people of Hawaii by providing a structured process to deal with issues that have plagued us since 1893. The misguided ef-

orts of my colleagues who seek to delay the Senate's consideration of this bill, however, may have a divisive effect on my state.

This bill is also important to the people of Hawaii because it affirms the dealings of Congress with Native Hawaiians since Hawaii's annexation in 1898. Congress has always treated Native Hawaiians as Hawaii's indigenous peoples, and therefore, as indigenous peoples of the United States. Federal policies towards Native Hawaiians have largely mirrored those pertaining to American Indian and Alaska Natives.

Congress has enacted over 160 statutes to address the conditions of Native Hawaiians including the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, the Native Hawaiian Education Act, and the Native Hawaiian Home Ownership Act. The programs that have been established are administered by federal agencies such as the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Housing and Urban Development, and Labor. As you can imagine, these programs go a long way to benefit Native Hawaiians, but they also serve as an important source of employment and income for many, many people in Hawaii, including many non-Native Hawaiians. There are many Hawaii residents whose livelihoods depend on the continuation of these programs and services.

This, colleagues, is why this bill is important to the people of Hawaii. I ask all of you to respect our efforts by voting to bring this bill to the floor for consideration and for a vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, under the previous order, if I might inquire, the time is allocated to this side; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct. Twenty-two minutes remains on the minority side.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Mr. President, may I be recognized?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Thank you, Mr. President.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, the underlying bill we are discussing is an attempt at a much needed reform of the health insurance system of this country.

If you wonder why there is the organization of health insurance in this country that we have, it is as a result of a historical accident. It was when all the veterans were coming home after World War II that employers, in order to get them to come and work for their company, would offer fringe benefits, one of those fringe benefits being health insurance. Therefore, a system developed in this country of organizing health insurance around an employer.

As time grew and things got more complicated, health insurance offered