

# Chronological: Hawaii Democratic Convention, Honolulu

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers  
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STATEMENT BY U.S. SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE  
HAWAII DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION ADDRESS  
SHERATON-WAIKIKI, HONOLULU, HAWAII  
MAY 31, 1992

Thirty-eight years ago, we embarked on an exciting political journey. We organized and mounted a revolution for change. Bursting with idealism and vigorous, forward looking ideas, we wanted a government that accorded equal opportunities for all people, regardless of race, regardless of religion. We wanted a government dedicated to raising the economic and educational quality of life for all people, regardless of race, regardless of religion.

Above all else, we knew that to be victorious and to have longevity, our government must be run by the people, accountable to the people, and serve the people -- not a small, elite minority -- but all the people.

And so began our political journey. Believe me, it was not an easy one. It was hard-fought and bitter. Led by retired police officer, Jack Burns, we confronted the then rulers of this island territory -- the economic oligarchy -- the "Big 5." It was a revolution of the people -- returning World War II veterans, Native Hawaiian leaders, teachers, workers in the fields, canneries and docks. We became the Party of the People -- men and women of all colors and all religions. We challenged the Big 5 ruling class -- we wanted a change, we wanted a chance.

Our Party of the People -- the Great Democratic Party of Hawaii -- has been in a leadership position since 1954. We have seen statehood. We have seen our children educated, and lead more prosperous lives. We have seen an Asian American governor. We now have a Native Hawaiian governor, a Filipino American lieutenant governor, women mayors, a multi-racial legislature, and councils representing the diversity of Hawaii.

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There is evidence that our government institution has become too large, too overwhelming. It has become less responsive to the needs of the people. Some have suggested that there have been those in government who put their personal agenda ahead of the needs of the people.

There is no question that we in government are so weighed down with information, responsibilities and conflicting views from special interest groups and our constituents, that our work becomes more difficult. It becomes more taxing, as we struggle to keep our heads above the stacks and stacks of paper. With technology constantly advancing, life has become increasingly complex and multi-faceted. It is becoming difficult to keep up with what is happening in Hawaii, the nation and the world.

These perceptions, charges, and allegations cause voters to become cynical, confused, and angry to the point of hostility. They view us as part of the problem -- not as part of the solution. This causes the entire institution of government in Hawaii and in Washington, D.C. to lose honor, to lose credibility as a place where people can turn for help and guidance.

Our political journey has come to a critical crossroad. We cannot continue down this path, lest we fall prisoner of our own history.

The Republican Party would like our political journey to take a fatal turn and self-destruct. That is the only way they would ever secure the leadership position in Hawaii. We would have to do it to ourselves. They have neither the strength nor the power of the people to do so. And we will

not allow them to control the future journey and destiny of Hawaii by default.

Think about it, just a few weeks ago, at their Convention, the Republican Party of Hawaii was forced to utilize a parliamentary gimmick to silence debate, for the sake of appearing united. This Party is more concerned about appearances than with solutions -- more concerned with criticism than substance -- more concerned with tearing down than building up. But what accomplishments can they point to? What is behind the facade? -- A 1990 platform because they cannot agree in 1992.

This Party of Appearances passed a resolution calling on the federal government to acknowledge the historical and moral right of Native Hawaiians to be recognized. We thank them very much. But I suggest that they mail it directly to their leader, President Bush.

It is their Commander-in-Chief, their President that publicly abdicated any federal responsibility for Native Hawaiians. It is their Republican-controlled White House that, for over a decade, has opposed and threatened to veto every Native Hawaiian program. It is their Party in the White House that continues to delete and oppose funding for the preservation of Hawaii's endangered species and pristine environment. It is their Party in the White House that continues to oppose program after program which support sugar, and Hawaii's diversified agricultural industries. I could go on and on.

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But through it all, we do not, and will not silence our Party members. Our house is big enough, strong enough and confident enough to open our doors to all. Our house is open to the young and old, the rich and poor, men and women, people of all races, religions, and sexual preferences. Our doors are open to our critics, to those who would deflate our egos and bruise our conscience. That is the foundation of a Democracy -- that is the foundation of the Party of the People.

We are at a critical cross-roads in our political journey. Our vibrant and proud history holds the key to our future. From this day forward, let us return to Jack Burns' revolutionary goal -- to create a government to provide equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, regardless of religion -- to improve our collective quality of life, and above all, to serve the people honestly and diligently to be best of our abilities.

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