

Chronological: S. 1988, Native American Diabetes Bill, 1986-04-15

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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STATEMENT BY SEN. DANIEL K. INOUE BEFORE THE SELECT

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS ON S.1988

--THE NATIVE AMERICAN DIABETES BILL

THE SERIOUS HEALTH STATUS OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS HAS BEEN
A MATTER OF MAJOR AND EVER-INCREASING CONCERN. AT THE
TURN OF THE CENTURY, THE NATIVE HAWAIIAN POPULATION
DECLINED SO PRECIPITOUSLY IT WAS BELIEVED, THEN, THAT
THIS GROUP MIGHT NOT SURVIVE AT ALL. DUE IN PART TO
THE ACTIONS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS EARLY AS THE
1920'S ON BEHALF OF THIS NATIVE POPULATION, BUT DUE

MOREOVER TO THEIR OWN TENACITY AND WILL TO SURVIVE,
THEIR NUMBERS HAVE STEADILY INCREASED. CURRENTLY,
THEY REPRESENT APPROXIMATELY ONE-FIFTH OF ALL PERSONS
IN THE STATE OF HAWAII, AND ONE-SIXTH OF ALL NATIVE
AMERICANS. UNFORTUNATELY, THEIR HEALTH STATUS REMAINS
FAR BELOW THAT OF THE NATIVE POPULATION AS A WHOLE.
THEIR LIFE EXPECTANCY IS FIVE TO TEN YEARS BELOW THAT
OF OTHERS IN THE STATE AND THEY SUFFER
DISPROPORTIONATELY FROM MAJOR CHRONIC ILLNESSES SUCH
AS HEART DISEASE, CANCER AND DIABETES.

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE HEALTH NEEDS OF NATIVE
HAWAIIANS HAS RECENTLY BEEN COMPLETED. IT FOUND THAT
DIABETES RANKS AS THE THIRD LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR

NATIVE HAWAIIANS. DATA FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SHOWS THAT SINCE 1910 NATIVE HAWAIIANS HAVE HAD THE HIGHEST MORTALITY FROM DIABETES OF ALL GROUPS IN THE STATE-- THREE TO FOUR TIMES GREATER. BOTH PREVALENCE AND MORTALITY RATES ARE MISLEADING, HOWEVER, SINCE DIABETES, KNOWN AS THE "SILENT KILLER," OFTEN GOES UNDETECTED AND IS MANIFEST IN OTHER DISEASES SUCH AS ARTERIOSCLEROSIS AND KIDNEY FAILURE. NATIVE HAWAIIANS, FOR EXAMPLE, REPRESENT APPROXIMATELY 40% OF ALL INSTAGE RENAL DISEASE PATIENTS IN THE STATE.

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES RECENTLY ISSUED THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY'S TASK

FORCE ON BLACK AND MINORITY HEALTH. THIS REPORT
CONFIRMS THE VERY HIGH PREVALENCE OF DIABETES AMONG
NATIVE AMERICANS, SUGGESTS THAT ABOUT HALF THE CASES
OF DIABETES AMONG AMERICANS ARE LIKELY TO BE
UNREPORTED, RECOMMENDS ADDITIONAL RESEARCH ON THE
PREVALENCE OF DIABETES AND ITS COMPLICATIONS AMONG
MINORITIES, AND EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH
EDUCATION AND LIFESTYLE CHANGE PROGRAMS FOR THE
PREVENTION AND EARLY RECOGNITION OF THIS DISEASE.
THESE ARE ALL ASPECTS OF SENATE BILL 1988. ITS
PROVISIONS WOULD DIRECTLY ADDRESS THIS SEVERE NEED
AMONG ALL NATIVE AMERICANS, INCLUDING NATIVE
HAWAIIANS.