

# Hinting at secession

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**D**ESPITE the disclaimers of its backers, a resolution passed by the House last week to commemorate 1993 as the anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy includes language that suggests talk of seceding from the United States.

The resolution calls for 1993 to be a time of reflection on the present and future of Hawaii by all who live here and "the promotion of debate revolving around the future of Hawaii as a Pacific island society, within or without the United States of America." Vice Speaker Peter Apo, Republican Leader Whitney Anderson and former Speaker Henry Peters defended the intent of the resolution sponsored by Rep. David Hagino, Apo insisting it was not secessionist.

Some legislators took exception to the phrase, which seems as gratuitous as it is mischievous. Hagino made an oblique reference to the mainland origins of those concerned about the wording, thus staking out the corners for another of the "Us vs. Them" debates. Legislators can do all the double-talking they want, but passing resolutions with this kind of rhetoric in them will be construed by reasonable people as talk of separatism.

That may be a valid political viewpoint, as is the proposed Hawaiian sovereignty — an undefined state which few seem able to agree on — but no one should be surprised at the reaction, or overreaction, elsewhere to its espousal by a state Legislature. Debating the future of Hawaii is a worthwhile endeavor, which the Legislature should be encouraged to promote. Making it a vehicle for further dividing the state from the rest of the country is a mistake.

Being able to express and debate such opinions is one of the rights of a country noting the 200th anniversary of its Bill of Rights this year. No one more than members of the Legislature should be anxious to remain connected to that heritage.