

MAR 15 2006

S.R. NO. 69

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THAT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII STUDY THE COST AND FEASIBILITY OF USING AVATAR TECHNOLOGY TO DEVELOP LAPTOP COMPUTERS FOR INSTANTANEOUS TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SYSTEMS FOR THE DEAF AND HEARING-IMPAIRED.

1 WHEREAS, there is a serious shortage of qualified American
2 Sign Language interpreters in Hawaii; and

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4 WHEREAS, the shortage of sign language interpreters affects
5 the State's ability to meet its obligations under the Americans
6 with Disabilities Act; and

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8 WHEREAS, the shortage and high cost of qualified sign
9 language interpreters places severe limits on the employability
10 of the deaf and hearing-impaired, and on their ability to
11 participate equally in public life; and

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13 WHEREAS, the inability of the deaf and hearing-impaired to
14 participate fully in public life raises costs for all
15 disability-related services and reduces tax revenue from persons
16 who could otherwise be gainfully employed; and

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18 WHEREAS, the Disability and Communication Access Board
19 within the Department of Health is charged with reviewing and
20 assessing the problems, and serving as a public advocate for the
21 needs, of persons with disabilities; and

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23 WHEREAS, the University of Hawaii is a leader in languages
24 and computer science and has excellent resources in these areas
25 that can be used locally to address the problems for the deaf
26 and hearing-impaired caused by the shortage of qualified sign
27 language interpreters; and

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29 WHEREAS, private business interests are already working
30 with three-dimensional animation ("Avatars") that could be
31 developed into "interpreter-in-a-laptop" products deployed in
32 EVDO-enabled laptop computers; and

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