
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO STUDY THE
FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION CENTER FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
INDIVIDUALS.

1 WHEREAS, the State benefits when its residents are
2 productive, contributing members of society; and

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4 WHEREAS, the ability to lead a productive life and
5 contribute to society is often closely related to the pursuit of
6 personal professional goals; and

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8 WHEREAS, the State has an interest in providing consistent
9 vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with
10 disabilities so that they may meet their personal employment
11 potential; and

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13 WHEREAS, individuals with disabilities that affect their
14 communication skills can face particular challenges when
15 entering the workforce; and

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17 WHEREAS, persons who are deaf or hard of hearing can
18 experience difficulties in communicating, which may be overcome
19 with specialized vocational rehabilitation services, such as the
20 use of American Sign Language and residual hearing amplification
21 techniques; and

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23 WHEREAS, a significant number of deaf and hard of hearing
24 individuals use American Sign Language as a primary mode of
25 communication; and

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27 WHEREAS, there exists a comprehensive state Department of
28 Human Services vocational rehabilitation program called Ho'opono
29 that provides vocational rehabilitation services for blind and
30 visually impaired individuals; and

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1 WHEREAS, a 1996 Legislative Reference Bureau study
2 entitled, "Vocational Rehabilitation Services for the Deaf and
3 Hard of Hearing in Hawaii" found that "there is no question that
4 the Department of Human Services is required to provide
5 vocational rehabilitation services to multiple populations,
6 including the deaf or hard of hearing subgroup," that "the deaf
7 population has not been receiving services on par with the blind
8 population," and that "the number of services and staff devoted
9 to vocational rehabilitation for the deaf group should be
10 substantially greater than at present"; and
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12 WHEREAS, Gallaudet University reports that, based on Census
13 Bureau data collected in 1994-1995, an estimated 5.56 percent of
14 Hawaii's population aged sixteen or older, or a little over
15 44,000 people, experience difficulty hearing in a normal
16 conversational setting, and 0.47 percent, or 3,719 individuals
17 aged sixteen or older cannot hear normal conversation at all;
18 and
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20 WHEREAS, this estimated population of over 47,700 could
21 benefit from services provided by a comprehensive state facility
22 providing their particular community with specialized vocational
23 rehabilitation services; and
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25 WHEREAS, in state fiscal year 2007, the Department of Human
26 Services Hawaii Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the
27 Blind served 243 deaf and hard of hearing adults, and placed
28 forty-five of these individuals in employment statewide; and
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30 WHEREAS, the purpose of a comprehensive vocational
31 rehabilitation center for persons who are deaf and hard of
32 hearing would be to provide vocational assessment related to
33 employment interests and capabilities, training related to
34 independent living or adjustment services, including money
35 management, time management, decisionmaking, and basic work
36 skills, and to provide job placement, job coaching, and other
37 necessary services to ensure that individual skills are
38 maximized with placement in appropriate job settings; and
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40 WHEREAS, services provided through a comprehensive state
41 facility specifically designed for adults who are deaf and hard
42 of hearing will improve client employment options and increase
43 the number of job placements; and
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1 WHEREAS, there may be centers on deafness in other states
2 that may act as models for the establishment of comparable
3 services in Hawaii; now, therefore,
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5 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
6 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
7 Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the Legislative
8 Reference Bureau is requested to report to the Legislature on
9 the feasibility of establishing a comprehensive center serving
10 deaf and hard of hearing individuals to coordinate and improve
11 their employment options through the Hawaii Vocational
12 Rehabilitation Services for the Blind Division of the Department
13 of Human Services; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
16 Bureau's study shall include research on model centers in other
17 states for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing to address
18 the type of services provided to the target population, and make
19 findings and recommendations to:
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- 21 (1) Define services to be delivered by a comprehensive
22 state facility providing vocational rehabilitation
23 services for individuals who are deaf and hard of
24 hearing;
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- 26 (2) Identify the potential population of deaf and hard of
27 hearing individuals in Hawaii who may benefit from the
28 provision of such services;
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- 30 (3) Determine the feasibility of establishing such a
31 center in Hawaii, including estimated costs;
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- 33 (4) Consult with agencies familiar with serving the target
34 population, including the Hawaii Vocational
35 Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division of
36 the Department of Human Services, the Vocational
37 Rehabilitation Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory
38 Board, the Disability and Communication Access Board,
39 the Hawaii Center for the Deaf and Blind, the
40 Kapiolani Deaf Center, the Aloha State Association of
41 the Deaf, the Hearing Loss Association of America,
42 Ohana Kokua Ano Kuli, Goodwill Industries of Hawaii,
43 and Hawaii Centers for Independent Living; and
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1 (5) Recommend legislation to establish such a center to
2 the Legislature for the Regular Session of 2009; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
5 Bureau shall submit its findings and recommendations to the
6 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
7 the Regular Session of 2009; and
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
10 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the
11 Legislative Reference Bureau, the Director of the Hawaii
12 Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division of
13 the Department of Human Services, the Chair of the Vocational
14 Rehabilitation Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board, the
15 Executive Director of the Disability and Communication Access
16 Board, the Administrator of the Hawaii Center for the Deaf and
17 Blind, the Director of the Kapiolani Deaf Center, the President
18 of the Aloha State Association of the Deaf, the Executive
19 Director of the Hearing Loss Association of America, the
20 Director of Ohana Kokua Ano Kuli, the President of Goodwill
21 Industries of Hawaii, and the Executive Director of Hawaii
22 Centers for Independent Living.
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OFFERED BY: _____



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