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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO STUDY THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF 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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32           WHEREAS, a 1996 Legislative Reference Bureau study  
33 entitled, "Vocational Rehabilitation Services for the Deaf and



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

