

LINDA LINGLE
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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January 24, 2008

LATE TESTIMONY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: H.B. 1998 – RELATING TO THE NUMBER OF BLIND, DEAF, AND
DEAF-BLIND PERSONS IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
Hearing: Thursday, January 24, 2008, 8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services for a survey of the number of blind, deaf, and deaf-blind persons in the State of Hawaii..

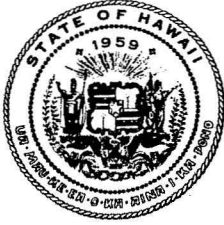
DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this bill and respectfully requests that its passage does not replace nor adversely impact the priorities in the Executive Supplemental Budget.

The Department recognizes the need for the survey because there is no current census of the number of blind, deaf, and deaf-blind persons residing in Hawaii. Accordingly, the blind, deaf and deaf-blind persons that receive our services are those referred by the Department of Education, ophthalmologists, friends and family members.

A survey will help identify those blind, deaf, and deaf-blind individuals that are not currently receiving services. Out reach to those individuals will enable them to learn about

services available such as vocational rehabilitation services that include but are not limited to independent living skills training, vocational training, job placement and services for older persons.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this bill.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HOUSING

House Bill 1998 - Relating to the Number of Blind, Deaf, and Deaf-Blind Persons in the
State of Hawaii

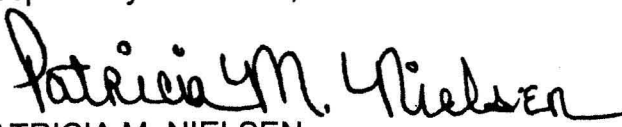
The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports the intent of House Bill 1998 - Relating to the Number of Blind, Deaf, and Deaf-Blind Persons in the State of Hawaii that appropriates an unspecified amount of money to the Department of Human Services to contract a third party to conduct a survey to determine the number of residents in Hawaii who are blind, deaf, and deaf-blind.

DCAB was a participant at the Deaf-Blind Task Force meetings that suggested this measure to obtain an accurate count of the target population in order to improve services. However, the bill asks only for a count, but does not state the rationale behind seeking the number nor does it define the population.

Although DCAB supports the intent of House Bill 1998, we suggest that it be amended as follows: (1) define the target population; (2) ask for a needs assessment rather than a survey to determine what services are needed/or wanted; and (3) seek information on geographic dispersion of the population. With these amendments, the survey will have an expanded scope and purpose. We defer to the Department of Human Services regarding the appropriation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,


PATRICIA M. NIELSEN
Chairperson
Legislative Committee


FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director