



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 101 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V/TDD) • Fax (808) 586-8129

January 31, 2008

LATE

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

Senate Bill 2050 - 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 Senate Bill 2050 - 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 Senate Bill 2050, 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
PATRICIA M. NIELSEN
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

Francine Wai
FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

THE SENATE
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE 2008
STATE OF HAWAII

LATE

TO: THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING
FROM: PAUL TOMIYASU, Deaf Individual
DATE: 1/31/08

REGARDING: **SB BILL 2050**, RELATING TO THE NUMBER OF BLIND, DEAF
AND DEAF BLIND PERSONS IN THE STATE OF HAWAII.

I am in favor of this measure. Since the last count in 1972, I would like to know how many people in the state are deaf. I believe many of my friends are no longer here, but it would be very interesting to know just how many are in our state.

Thank you,

Francine Aona Kenyon
aka KULI IKE KOKUA
2520 Jasmine Street
Honolulu, HI 96816
fkennyon09@sprintpcs.com

LATE

Thursday, January 31, 2008 at 1:30 pm
Conference Room 016

**TESTIMONY
TO
SENTATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING
ON
SB 2050, RELATING TO THE NUMBER OF BLIND, DEAF,
AND DEAF-BLIND PERSONS IN THE STATE OF HAWAII**

Aloha! Chair Suzanne Chun Oakland, Vice-Chair Les Ihara, Members, and Friends:

My name is Francine Kenyon. I am a long-time advocate and volunteer consultant for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind people of the State of Hawaii, and I wear many hats.

I support the intent of SB 2050 - RELATING TO THE NUMBER OF BLIND, DEAF, AND DEAF-BLIND PERSONS IN THE STATE OF HAWAII. I suggest the phrase, "*hard of hearing*" be inserted, because there are many hard of hearing people who sometimes misunderstand or miss what is being said.

A demographic study, such as this, will help to determine how we can develop and implement fully accessible emergency preparedness awareness and other services for this group. For example, blind people can hear the clicking sounds when the traffic light changes alerting them when it is safe them to cross the streets. They can also hear the emergency sirens to alert them about the incoming disasters. Deaf people cannot hear the sirens but will see many people going to safety and would follow them. Can Deaf-blind people function independently without a personal assistant? Also, this will help to find which geographic areas have more deaf, blind, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind people. This information will help to determine where to transmit appropriate types of emergency warning notices in the community.

The information from this survey will help to determine the importance of creating and developing a community center for deaf and blind people.

Mahalo nui loa for allowing me to testify on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Francine Aona Kenyon
Deaf Advocate & Consultant

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER, ESQ.
DIRECTOR

HENRY OLIVA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

LATE TESTIMONY

January 31, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: S.B. 2050 – RELATING TO THE NUMBER OF BLIND, DEAF, AND
DEAF-BLIND PERSONS IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
Hearing: Thursday, January 31, 2008, 1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds 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 who receive our services are those referred by the Department of Education, ophthalmologists, friends and family members.

Having the survey will help us identify those blind, deaf, and deaf-blind individuals who are not currently receiving services. Outreach to those individuals will enable them to learn about our agency and have the choice of receiving vocational rehabilitation services that include

but are not limited to independent living skills training, vocational training, job placement and our older blind services.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this bill.