

JAN 21 2011

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO INFORMATION ACCESS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Thousands of Hawaii residents experience
2 disabilities such as visual impairments, dyslexia, and physical
3 impairments that prevent them from directly accessing
4 conventional print media. Many printed materials are available
5 through governmental and nonprofit agencies in accessible
6 formats such as braille, large print, or audio recording.
7 However, it is generally not practical to provide time-sensitive
8 information such as a local daily newspaper in these specialized
9 formats. The legislature finds that even in a media environment
10 where information is frequently available in multiple formats
11 that are both portable and widely accessible, telephone-based
12 audible information access remains an important service for many
13 individuals.

14 SECTION 2. Chapter 269, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
15 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
16 and to read as follows:

17 "§269- Telephone-based access to time-sensitive print
18 media. (a) The public utilities commission shall ensure that a



1 telephone-based audible information access service is available
2 statewide to individuals with visual or other impairments that
3 limit access to printed media.

4 (b) The commission shall investigate the availability of
5 experienced providers of quality telephone-based audible
6 information access service and shall award a contract to provide
7 this service to the provider or providers that the commission
8 determines to be best qualified. In reviewing the
9 qualifications of the provider or providers, the commission
10 shall consider the factors of cost, quality of services,
11 experience, and any other factors that the commission deems
12 appropriate.

13 (c) The commission shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter
14 91 to administer a telephone-based audible information access
15 service, including the establishment of a surcharge or other
16 mechanism to collect customer contributions which shall be
17 deposited into the universal service fund established pursuant
18 to section 269-42 to recover the costs of establishing and
19 maintaining the service.

20 (d) As used in this section:

21 "Telephone-based audible information access service" means
22 the delivery of current daily newspapers and other periodicals



1 in audio format through a telephone call to a local or toll-free
2 telephone number."

3 SECTION 3. Section 269-41, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 " ~~[§]~~ **§269-41** ~~[§]~~ **Universal service program; establishment;**
6 **purpose; principles.** There is established the universal service
7 program. The purpose of this program is to:

- 8 (1) Maintain affordable, just, and reasonable rates for
9 basic residential telecommunications service, as
10 defined by the commission;
- 11 (2) Assist customers located in the areas of the State
12 that have high costs ~~[of]~~ for essential
13 telecommunications service, low-income customers, and
14 customers with disabilities~~[7]~~ in obtaining and
15 maintaining access to a basic set of essential
16 telecommunications services as determined by the
17 commission~~[-The]~~; provided that the commission may
18 expand or otherwise modify relevant programs~~[7]~~ such
19 as the lifeline program ~~[under]~~ established pursuant
20 to section 269-16.5;

- 21 (3) Ensure that consumers in all communities are provided
22 with access~~[7]~~ at reasonably comparable rates~~[7]~~ to



1 all telecommunications services [~~which are~~] used by a
2 majority of consumers located in metropolitan areas of
3 the State [~~—The~~]; provided that the commission shall
4 provide for a reasonable transition period to support
5 the statewide deployment of these advanced
6 telecommunications services [7] including [7] but not
7 limited to [~~the use of~~] using strategic community
8 access points in public facilities such as education,
9 library, and health care facilities;

10 (4) Ensure that consumers are given the information
11 necessary to make informed choices among the
12 alternative telecommunications carriers and services;
13 [~~and~~]

14 (5) Promote affordable access throughout the State to
15 enhanced government information and services,
16 including education, health care, public safety, and
17 other government services [~~—~~]; and

18 (6) Provide access for visually or otherwise impaired
19 individuals to civic and community information,
20 including timely news media through telecommunications
21 infrastructure.



1 The commission shall administer the universal service
2 program, including [~~the establishment of criteria by which~~] by
3 establishing criteria to effectuate the purposes of the program
4 [~~are met~~]."

5 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the universal
6 service fund established pursuant to section 269-42, Hawaii
7 Revised Statutes, the sum of \$ or so much thereof as
8 may be necessary for fiscal year 2011-2012 and the same sum or
9 so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2012-2013 to
10 establish and maintain a telephone-based audible information
11 access service.

12 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the public
13 utilities commission for the purposes of this Act.

14 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
15 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2011.

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Report Title:

Telephone-based Audible Information Access Service; Public Utilities Commission; Appropriation

Description:

Directs the public utilities commission to establish and maintain a telephone-based audible information access service to provide access to daily newspapers and other periodicals in an audio medium; amends the purpose of the universal service program to include information access; makes appropriation.

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