

HB 758

HD1, SD1

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
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March 30, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 758, H.D. 1, S.D. 1 - AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF
GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND MAKING AN
APPROPRIATION FOR THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND DIVISION**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 30, 2011, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division, Department of Human Services, to upgrade equipment and facilities for the Ho'opono program, effective date July 1, 2050.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the purpose of this bill to improve the building housing the Ho'opono Services for the Blind Branch of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division of DHS.

Given the fiscal situation that the State is currently facing, however, now is not the time to be requiring the State to increase its financial obligations. When the fiscal

situation of the State improves, the Department will consider submitting a budgetary request for the needed capital improvements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

2011-03-29 HB758 HD1 SD1 testimony.txt

Dear Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and the members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I support HB 758, HD1, SD1.

In the roughly two decades since I'd first visited Ho`opono as a teenager, Ho`opono has made great strides to becoming a world-class training center for the blind and visually impaired. In fact, it was the first state-run program to join several privately-run programs a few years ago as being certified as the best in the country.

However, Ho`opono's facilities and equipment hasn't been upgraded to match. For at least two decades, they have seen only minor upgrades. Furthermore, Ho`opono also trains blind people from some other Pacific islands. While in Hawai`i, these students experience the discrepancy between the quality of Ho`opono's training and the state of its facilities and equipment.

Please pass this bill so Ho`opono can continue improving it's quality training for the blind and visually impaired.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ronalene White - Kahalu`u, HI
VP, Anuenue Chapter
National Federation of the Blind of Hawai`i