

HB758,HD1

Measure Title: AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND SERVICES FOR THE BLIND DIVISION.

Report Title: Services for the Blind; Ho'opono; CIP Appropriation

Description: Appropriates funds for the vocational rehabilitation and services for the blind services, Department of Human Services, to upgrade equipment and facilities for the Ho'opono program. Effective date July 1, 2050. (HB758 HD1) (\$)

Companion:

Package: Deaf and Blind

Current Referral: HMS, WAM

Introducer(s): MIZUNO

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



PATRICIA McMANAMAN
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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
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March 17, 2011

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

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

Hearing: Thursday, March 17, 2011, 1:45 p.m.
Conference Room 016, 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) supports the overall concept of this bill as it includes initiatives supportive of our goals and objectives but we are concerned about the cost implications generated by this proposal.

Ho'opono Services for the Blind, a Branch of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division of the Department of Human Services, is housed in an aging building. The improvements needed are roof repairs to prevent leaks, renovation

of the public restrooms, and improvements to the acoustics and soundproofing the auditorium to allow persons with hearing impairments to hear more clearly during meetings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

TESTIMONY OF WARREN TOYAMA IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 758

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee;

My name is Warren Toyama and I am the founder and president of the 43 year old Hawaii Association of the Blind. I am testifying in support of House Bill 758 which calls in part for an appropriation bond for Ho'opono's building and some of the things that are needed to upgrade the Ho'opono program.

Mr. Chairman, the truth of the matter is that we as blind consumers have permitted personal feelings to interfere with us doing what we can to assist the Ho'opono program thrive and effectively rehabilitate blind clients. We have decided to correct our failures and our support of H. B. 758 is a sign of this change.

We, the blind, want to declare that we shall have the best rehabilitation program for the blind in the United States. We pledge to take aim at the Iowa and other top programs in the country and help to build Hawaii's rehabilitation program to match or surpass the nation's best programs.

To achieve this, we need to begin with little steps, like fixing some of the flaws in the Ho'opono building. We need also to begin putting together the most ambitious and creative team of rehabilitation counselors, teachers and aides we can find to build a positive, forward looking team.

To this end we need your help to get us started. Please pass House Bill 758.

Thank you very much.