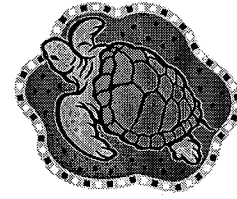


Francine Mae Aona Kenyon

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair**

LATE

Friday, February 25, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. in Conference Room 211

**SENATE BILL No. 127, MAKING A GRANT FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE**

Aloha, my name is Francine Mae Aona Kenyon. I am an active, strong Deaf advocate for the civil rights of people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind in the State of Hawaii with many hats. I have been testifying for more than 20 years on various bills.

In addition to my testimony to Senate Committee on Human Services chaired by Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, I strongly provide my full support of Senate Bill No. 127, Making a Grant for the Establishment and Operation of a Comprehensive Deaf Center because of an essential goal of empowering persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind to fully participate in the general community.

Deaf people in Hawaii have long struggled, seeking the funds to establish and operate a comprehensive deaf center which has been our dream since the Deaf Action Group began its mission in 1970. Hawaii Services on Deafness **COULD** have grown and expanded as a comprehensive deaf center with more programs and services but had to close its doors two years ago, due to lack of funds to continue its operation since its first inception in 1979 through the federal grant project.

I'd like to remind you that the State of Hawaii spent thousands of dollars to send two or three deaf clients to the mainland for mental health services that the State could not provide. Those thousands of dollars **COULD HAVE SPENT** more wisely to establish and operate our own comprehensive deaf center here in Hawaii with professionals skilled in sign language.

The establishment and operation of a Comprehensive Deaf Center would be more beneficial not only to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind but also to people with or without disabilities desiring to learn more about Deaf culture, communication access, and new advanced technology. Like Filipino Community Center in Waipahu or Japanese Cultural Center, we could also generate revenue from rental of our facilities to conduct public awareness on hearing loss or advanced communication technology for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind and from small businesses owned and operated by deaf people. The Center could also seek out more funds through applying for grants that would help continue the operation of long-term programs without interruption of services.

On behalf of the Deaf community, please help enable us to accomplish our dream for a comprehensive deaf center in the State of Hawaii.

Mahalo for your support of the Deaf community with ALOHA!

Sincerely,

Francine Mae Aona Kenyon
Deaf Advocate

Senator David Ige, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Capitol
415 Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 20, 2011

LATE

Re: Support for SB 127 Making a Grant for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Deaf Center

Dear Chair Ige and members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Judy Coryell and I am the mother of 2 deaf daughters. I also have taught deaf students and directed deaf-related programs for more than 30 years. In addition, I am a member of Senator Chun-Oakland's Deaf and Blind Task Force and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Did you know that this type of a Comprehensive Deaf Center has been a dream of the Deaf Community for the past 38 years? Numerous groups have worked on trying to establish a Deaf Center and the work is continuing. There have been City & County and state studies (LRB) that identified the serious need for this type of center to provide programs and services that will help to maximize deaf people's ability to lead productive and fulfilling lives—personally, vocationally, academically, financially, and socially. We are determined to find a way to provide comprehensive programs and services to deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing individuals across the state. The Comprehensive Deaf Center is a one-stop service center that can address so many of the unmet needs of deaf people and provide them with equal access to services that are taken for granted by people who can hear and can easily communicate in spoken English. Many of the state programs and services are not fully accessible to deaf people yet they pay the same state taxes that their hearing neighbors pay. The Comprehensive Deaf Center can provide support and access with programs and services that are designed for this special population and are provided in a barrier-free communication environment.

The benefits of the Comprehensive Deaf Center are numerous. The Center concept:

- offers an option for a cost-effective, convenient, centralized, and efficient delivery of a wide range of essential programs and service in one space;
- creates the ability for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals to become self-sustaining, tax-paying citizens who are prepared for and hold jobs that provide them with an income and are meaningful and rewarding;
- enhances communication and literacy skills of deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals and their families;
- provides opportunities for self-employment through a micro-enterprise development program.

The ultimate benefit will be improved quality of life for deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind individuals in the work place, at home, and in the community.

I humbly ask for your vote to support the establishment and funding of the Comprehensive Deaf Center—for the Deaf Community and most importantly to me, for my daughters.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Judy Coryell

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2011 4:21 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: mikeytomita@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for SB127 on 2/25/2011 9:00:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for WAM 2/25/2011 9:00:00 AM SB127

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Mikey Tomita
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: mikeytomita@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/24/2011

Comments:

on behalf of SB 127 making a grant for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Deaf Center, my name is mikey tomita and i'm full Deaf.
after graduation from gallaudet college located in washington, d.c., i was hired to work for oahu state vocational rehabilitation as counselor's aide for the Deaf from 1976 to 1978, i had been juggling few hats to assist the Deaf adults to find jobs, to counsel on budget and independent living skills, and most importantly to counsel on marriage / family problems plus communication problems between state and federal agencies and Deaf clients.
i feel strongly that COMPREHENSIVE DEAF CENTER IS NEEDED TO BE SET UP THE CENTER TO ASSIST THE DEAF IN IMPROVING THEIR LIVES because most of Deaf employees work harder to pay taxes towards hawaii state, counties, and federal; why not we have great contributes from hawaii state ?
I feel strongly that there are many state, county, non profit, and private agencies that serve hearing consumers many years; i want more fair shares from you to support SB 127 COMPREHENSIVE DEAF CENTER.
Your belief in supporting SB 127 COMPREHENSIVE DEAF CENTER is blessed and appreciated greatly by our Deaf community as well as NEIGHBOR ISLANDS (MAUI, BIG ISLAND, KAUAI, AND OAHU)
SHAKALOHA FROM MIKEY TOMITA