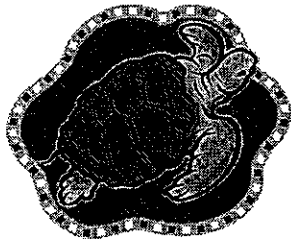


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FRANCINE MAE AONA KENYON

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**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Vice-Chair

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair

Les Ihara, Jr., Vice-Chair
Tuesday, February 8, 2011
At 1:30 pm

Conference Room 016

**SENATE BILL NO. 894
RELATING TO HEARING AIDS**

Aloha, my name is Francine Mae Aona Kenyon. I am deaf and a strong advocate for the Deaf community.

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill No. 894, Relating to hearing Aids that requires health insurance policies and contracts to provide coverage for the cost of hearing aids in their base plans because of my deafness and of costly purchases and repairs.

I wear binaural digital hearing aids which cost about \$2,000.00 each. In the past, Vocational Rehabilitation and Hawaii Center on Independent Living had helped purchase the hearing aids. But only once we can get the assistance from them toward the purchase of hearing aids. The audiologists advised us to have new hearing aids every two or three years but they are very costly. Some of us are not fully employed and are unable to continue purchasing new hearing aids.

I know parents of deaf children have spent thousands of dollars to get hearing aids for their children all of their lives. That is quite a lot for parents to pay out of their pockets.

Hearing aids are not expensive and do not go lower like televisions, radios, DVD players or IPODs which can go down on sale but not the prices of hearing aids that keep going up and up and up and up, not doing down and down and down.

I have the Kaiser health insurance but I have to deduct \$20.00 from my SSDI toward vision, hearing, and dental service as an extra rider.

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

Sincerely, -

Francine Mae Aona Kenyon

Francine Mae Aona Kenyon
Deaf Advocate