

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR



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STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 17, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Interim Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 127, S.D. 1 - MAKING A GRANT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT  
AND OPERATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE DEAF CENTER**

Hearing: Thursday, March 17, 2011, 9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services as a grant for the establishment and operation of a comprehensive deaf center.

**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 and an adverse impact to the priorities as indicated in the Executive Biennium Budget.

DHS currently has a Memorandum of Agreement with the University of Hawaii, Kapiolani Community College Deaf Center/Gallaudet University Regional Center to provide deaf adjustment services and planning, research and grant writing services

for laying the groundwork for a comprehensive vocational rehabilitation center for deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind persons. The scope of services includes research and applying for grants to secure funding to finance a Comprehensive Vocational Rehabilitation Center for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind Individuals (CVRC). A final report is due to the DHS at the end of the project period on September 30, 2011.

It seems to be premature to authorize spending for this project without the findings and recommendations of the final report.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Representative Mizuno, Chair  
House Human Services Committee  
State of Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 16, 2011

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

Dear Chair Mizuno and Committee members,

My name is Billy Kekua and I am Deaf. I represent as the Vice-President of Aloha State Association of the Deaf. I moved back here home after fourteen years of living on the East Coast and am excited to call it my home once again. I joined with the Comprehensive Deaf Center Committee with respective members from the signing community. It is a honor to work with them and contribute my time and energy to this important cause.

I have worked for a deaf human service agency in Washington D.C. for 4 years and three agencies in Philadelphia for two years. I advocated for my Deaf clients' rights, accompanied with them to their appointments and the such. I feel that it is necessary to have a location where all deaf members can meet up for variety of services provided for their needs.

Therefore I feel that the administration and staff of the agency should be open and accessible to all deaf people who communicate in American Sign Language. I would like to see a center where everyone feel comfortable enough to come and ask for assistance in their language.

I am constantly reminded that I am fortunate to have many important people who believed in me. My passion for the life thrived - that is something I wish many of us experience the same with what I had. Despite the long time campaign for the establishment of the Deaf Center, this time is now and hope you will give the opportunity for the Deaf Community to thrive.

I believe that with their personal success will help them to be more financially responsible, ability to lead the healthy life and definitely on the way to become independent Deaf adults. I ask you to please consider and vote for the establishment and funding of the Comprehensive Deaf Center.

Thank you so much

Sincerely,  
Billy Kekua  
ASAD Vice-President

Representative John Mizuno, Chair  
Committee on Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 16, 2011

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

Dear Chair Mizuno and members of the Human Services 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, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the State Rehabilitation Council.

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

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**From:** Ed Chevy [edchevy59@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 14, 2011 7:37 PM  
**To:** HUSTestimony  
**Cc:** edchevy59@gmail.com  
**Subject:** S.R.NO 127 COMPREHENSIVE; APPROPRIATION; GRANT

Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Rep. Jo Jordan, Vice Chair  
Committee on Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania St  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: SUPPORT for Making a Grant for the Establishment and Operation of a Comprehensive Deaf Center

Notice of Hearing  
Date: Thursday, March 17, 2011  
Time: 9:00am  
Place: Conference Room 329

Dear Chair Mizuno and Vice Chair, Jordan,

My name is Ed Chevy and I am a deaf advocate for years. I am , also, involved, struggling with the development of the Community Deaf Center since 1990. I support the SB 127, asking for money to be added back into the bill. We, the Deaf, the Hard of Hearing, and the Deaf-Blind are all working together as one. We are always carrying around an empty bowl with nothing inside to help meet our needs, coping with the real world. It would be helpful if we see money back in the bowl so that we can begin with some real works. Everybody's life depends on the bowl. An empty bowl would be very unhealthy.

Please added money back into the bill so that we can have the center to be part of the wellness. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Ed Chevy

Representative John Mizuno, Chair  
Committee on Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 17, 2011

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

Dear Chair Mizuno and members of the Committee on Human Services,

My name is Scott Cohen. I have a degree from Gallaudet University and I would like to contribute my skills I learned as a tenure student at Gallaudet, to the deaf community. The Center will provide me the opportunity to share and demonstrate my skill to my peers. The local peers will also be able to contribute their knowledge to the Center, creating mainstream network for the deaf community over the State of Hawaii. Myself, was born on Maui, flew to Oahu to learn the language of the deaf community at age 5, defined the consideration of late language development. The accessibility and accommodation create by the Center will be able to expand the service to serve the needs for the statewide deaf community. The establishment of the Comprehensive Deaf Center will provide the much-needed service to the deaf community in the State of Hawaii.

To enable people who are Deaf to have a safe environment to socialize, obtain necessary services from agencies with American Sign Language skill and are familiar with deaf people and deaf culture, I am committed to developing that in a Comprehensive Deaf Center in Hawaii. The Center will allow deaf people to be as individually as possible by providing an environment where a number of services and social activities can be provided. Please allow this center to become a reality by appropriating start up funds to begin operations and establishment of services.

Our Deaf community have been asking the state in years for a site where our community can function and thrive together. It is critical to establish the center now, more than ever.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

*Scott Cohen*  
*Kula, Maui*

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**From:** Susan Miller [sbernadette@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 15, 2011 8:08 AM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Subject:** Testimony in favor of SB 127

March 15, 2012

Greetings Honorable committee members:

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 127 and thus approve the creation of the deaf/blind deaf community center in Honolulu.

Our deaf, deaf/blind community members need such a center to address their needs unique to accommodating their disabilities in all areas of their daily lives.

Such a centre is long long overdue!!! Over the years, non-disabled and disabled community advocates together have worked to advance this effort. Even in years of abundant available funds, There were myriad barriers and excuses that prevented implementing the funding to make this happen.

Let's make 2011 the year that gives an important segment of our island communities who live with deafness and deaf/blindness the effective supports needed in the form a one-stop community resource center.

This is a obvious glaring need - not a luxury.

Respectfully,  
Susan Miller  
UH Center on Disability Studies

Susan Miller

Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair  
Committee on Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 17, 2011

Re: Support for SB127 Making a Grant for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Deaf Center

Dear John M. Mizuno and members of the Committee on Human Services,

My name is Cheryl Mizusawa and I am a private citizen and no longer employed at the Hawaii Centers for Independent Living. I am still unemployed and still involved with helping consumer's needs, member of Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland's Deaf and Blind Task Force.

My point of view that many deaf people from 16 years old to over 80 years old felt very comfortable with deaf staff. It will be a great benefit if Comprehensive Deaf Center to be establish. I guaranteed that Deaf people will be very thrilling to have many wonderful opportunity to attend the workshop like skill of the Independent Living, empowerment, employment training, and many other things they really want to learn.

In my time way back to 1970s there was always struggled to get job, where to go because most non-profit organizations did not have any experience with the deaf consumers. They decided to use written communication with me. I told them that my language was not first English language. I would rather to have ASL interpreter but they do not have any fund for the interpreter to provide. I always turned around and sit and think all the disabilities with hearing people are very fortunate to receive the services. I couldn't get other service but only depend on the Vocational Rehabilitation (Deaf Services) that always provide me with employment training, job placement. I couldn't rejected some my deaf friends who need my help because they couldn't trust hearing people because hearing people couldn't explain them fully but give them brief summary. Last year, I was laid off from Hawaii Centers for Independent Living due to the financial. They put limit to provide the interpreters due to the fund. Most former consumers called me and ask for my help.

To enable people who are deaf to have a safe environment to socialize, obtain necessary services from agencies who sign and are familiar with deaf people and deaf culture, I am committed to developing that in a Comprehensive Deaf Center in Hawaii. The Center will allow deaf people to be as independent as possible by providing an environment where a number of services and social activities can be provided. Please allow this center to become a reality by appropriating start up funds to begin operations and establishment of services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Cheryl Mizusawa