

Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 9, 201

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

Dear Chair Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland,

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 just got myself involved with the Comprehensive Deaf Center Committee along with respective members Dr. Judy Coryell, Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland and members of the Deaf community.

I have worked for a deaf human service agency in Washington D.C. for 4 years and three agencies in Philadelphia for two years. My role was to provide the support for deaf clients especially when there were several cases of obvious communication barriers. I advocated for their 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. The administration and staff of the agency should be open and accessible to all deaf people who communicate in American Sign Language.

Therefore I believe that the establishment of Comprehensive Deaf Center will effective for all kinds of services such as human service programs, vocational rehabilitation, interpreting programs, and others in one location where everyone can meet and use the services in a safe environment. I ask that the reality of the CDC to be achieved with your support and I thank you for your time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Billy Kekua  
ASAD Vice-President



## Signs of Self

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Kaheka Professional Center  
1481 South King Street, #544  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Committee on Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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

Dear Chair Chun Oakland and members of the committee on Human Services

My name is Scott O'Neal and I am a Hawai'i Licensed Clinical Social Worker, contractor with the Departments of Education and Human Services, small business owner for over 10 years, and in private practice as a counselor/therapist – primarily working with the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind. Due to a series of fortunate circumstances I had the opportunity to attend and graduate from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., with a Masters in Social Work. In case you aren't familiar with it, Gallaudet is the world's only university in which all programs and services are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing students. I am not deaf.

Coming from Hawai'i, attending Gallaudet and being in Washington, D.C. was an amazing and eye opening experience for me. The Washington, D.C. area has a large Deaf population, has many programs and community services available to people with a hearing-loss, and provides many opportunities for these individuals. In many ways, being deaf in this environment normalizes the lives of those with a hearing-loss and gives them strength to grow and achieve the same things as their hearing counterparts.

There are deaf poor and rich people; deaf doctors and lawyers; deaf janitors and a deaf University President; deaf architects and computer scientists; deaf Masters and Doctorate level clinicians and researchers; deaf store owners and program administrators; deaf substance abusers and peer educators; deaf people of color – experiencing the same challenges as those who are not deaf; and, deaf people who may also be blind or have other developmental disabilities, but are still able to make and achieve whatever goals they are able to set for their lives. The possibilities are endless and it was great for me to witness this. And, I was spoiled.

And then I returned to Hawai'i;

- Where many deaf children graduate from High School with maybe a 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade reading level.
- Where it is possible to count the number of deaf professionals with a college degree, and not all of them are even employed.
- Where there is not one deaf doctor, lawyer, program administrator, or government official.
- Where the number one employment goal for many deaf individuals is to work at Wal-Mart or stocking in a warehouse.
- Where the community is so fragmented, partly due to geographic isolation, people can go for months or years without being able to have a real conversation with another person because they don't have access to anyone else who is able to communicate with them.

- Where low self-esteem and apathy have become such a way of life for the deaf in Hawai'i that many people don't even try to get them to stand up for themselves anymore.
- Where reliance on State and Federal entitlements (Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public assistance) has become the norm, costing the State millions of dollars a year in lost revenue and potential.
- Where families are forced to contact agency after agency, trying to find the supports they need to help their loved ones – and often giving up and just accepting that they will need to care for their deaf family member for the rest of both of their lives.
- And, where those individuals who do actually dream and have potential regularly leave Hawai'i and move to the mainland to seek the opportunities and equality they know exists but that they also know they may never find by staying in Hawai'i.

In the Bill it states “[a center] has been the dream of the deaf community in Hawaii since 1972”. In actuality a Center such as the one being proposed is, AND SHOULD BE, much more than that. It is a right of people with a hearing loss in Hawai'i that has been overlooked and dismissed for far too long. It's so easy to cast aside this need and right by saying “it's too expensive” or “there are other services they can access”, but if that were true, where are the examples of successful local deaf persons and role models to prove this?

No one can argue that a Comprehensive Deaf Center, such as that being proposed, won't benefit the people of Hawai'i. There are models of successful centers in other States, and the benefits to individuals with a hearing loss and the entire community are clear – a Center would:

- offer an option for a cost-effective, convenient, centralized, and efficient delivery of a wide range of essential programs and service in one space;
- create 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;
- reduce the dependence on State and Federal entitlement programs, saving millions of dollars a year and increasing the overall level of the workforce in Hawai'i;
- enhance communication and literacy skills of deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals and their families;
- and, provide opportunities for self-employment through a micro-enterprise development program.

The ultimate benefit will be improved quality of life for Hawai'i's deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals in the work place, at home, and in the community. Yes it will cost money at the start. And it will require the fragmented Hawai'i community to come together and work together toward a common goal. But, the potential pay-off is enormous.

Because of this, I humbly ask for your support in making this dream/right a reality in Hawai'i. What we do today will change the future. Whether that change results in a more positive future for Hawai'i is in your hands. As have you folks, I have devoted my life to trying to make the changes necessary to improve the lives of those in need. Together I do believe it is possible to make this happen.

Thank you for reading through this and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Scott O'Neal, LCSW

Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
Committee on Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 8, 2011

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

Dear Chair Chun-Oakland and members of the Committee on Human Services,

My name is Judy Coryell and I am the parent of two deaf daughters as well as the director of the Gallaudet Regional Center at Kapi'olani Community College. I have been personally involved with developing a deaf center as a parent, member of Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland's Deaf and Blind Task Force, member of the Vocational Rehabilitation's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board and member of the community. I am currently developing plans for the Center with a Leadership Team composed of deaf and hearing members of the Deaf Community.

**Description of the Center.** The Comprehensive Deaf Center (CDC) is a Hawai'i community center that is being developed to promote individual growth, social awareness, productivity and equality, by empowering deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind persons to be full participants in the Hawai'i community at large. Hawai'i's only Comprehensive Deaf Center will provide programs and services to deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals *to maximize their ability to lead productive and fulfilling lives—personally, vocationally, academically, financially, and socially.* It is designed as a one-stop service center for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals, their families/friends, and the professionals who work with them. The Center will house vocational specialists, counselors, adjustment specialists, and educational specialists, and audiologists.

"The mission of the Comprehensive Deaf Center is to provide a social gathering place for members of the Deaf Community and their families to expand access to knowledge and communication through support, empowerment, education and enhancement of self-sufficiency." A staff of 5 full-time professionals will offer support for a diverse group of people including (for example):

- vocational counseling and training for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind adults for independence and self-sufficiency;
- adjustment services for youth and adults who have recently lost their hearing or are becoming dually sensory impaired (deaf and blind);
- workshops on effective communication strategies and information about assistive devices for senior citizens who are losing their hearing;
- programs and services for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind children and their families in need of information and resources for maximizing the abilities of their children.

For deaf people, the Center will provide selected job training programs including a unique Micro-enterprise Development program that will include job training in areas such as auto detailing, cleaning services, food preparation, and technology repair (including assistive technology used by deaf and hard of hearing individuals). This program will also provide technical assistance and business service support for individuals who are interested in starting deaf-, hard of hearing-, or deaf-blind-owned and operated micro-enterprise businesses.

The Center will also provide programs for enhancing independent living skills (including cooking and meal planning, money management, and job readiness skills), classes to improve English and communication skills (reading, writing, speech reading), and American Sign Language classes for new signers, families of deaf children, and community members. It may also house related programs such as an interpreting lab for KCC sign language interpreting students and community interpreters as well as extension offices for the Kapi'olani Deaf Center and the Gallaudet University Regional Center of the Pacific.

Finally, it will serve as a social and cultural gathering place for Deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals for continuing education programs and community events.

**Need for the Center.** This Center has been the dream of the Deaf Community since 1972 and the need been documented and recommended in county- and state-funded studies published in 1976, 2001, and 2009. In response to the 2009 Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) report, the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division has recently funded a planning effort through Kapi'olani Community College/Kapi'olani Deaf Center to design and propose a Comprehensive Deaf Center. Establishing a Deaf Adjustment Center is one of the top priorities identified by Vocational Rehabilitation in their State Plan. This request for legislative support and funding is a component of the planning process.

A Comprehensive Deaf Center will invite participation from the various diverse populations in Hawai'i who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind including approximately 375 deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind school-aged children and 80,000 deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind adults.

The Center addresses serious employment, educational, and personal challenges facing this diverse special population. Deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind adults, especially those who have been deaf since childhood, are historically underemployed and rarely advance or are unemployed and are receiving Social Security Supplemental Income and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI: federal financial assistance program for aged and people with disabilities). Families with deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind children are in dire need of information and resources for raising special needs children. Only 5% of parents of ASL-using

deaf and deaf-blind children are able to effectively communicate with their children in an understandable language.

Personal, educational, and vocational needs vary for the different populations. The Center's programs and services will be designed to address those distinct needs and interests including information, resources, independent living and self-advocacy skills, instruction in English and ASL, vocational training, placement, and coaching, communication strategies including use of assistive technology, and other related vocational and personal supports. In addition, as described in the LRB report, "disconnected and uncoordinated service delivery minimizes the effectiveness of already limited resources... for the full range of needed resources, programs and services". In order to receive various needed services, deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind consumers still have to travel to multiple locations and interact with multiple providers to receive the range of services needed. This is the basis for centralizing services in a one-stop service center.

**Benefits of the Center.** The benefits of a Comprehensive Deaf Center to deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals 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.

To enable people who are deaf to have a positive and fully accessible environment to 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,

Judith Coryell

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Committee on Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 10, 2011

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

Dear Chair Chun 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

*Scott Cohen*  
*Kula, Maui*

Gisella Tomita  
725 Luakaha Street #B-2  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816  
Video Phone: 808-447-1462  
Email: [gisella.tomita@gmail.com](mailto:gisella.tomita@gmail.com)

Honorable Senators:

My name is Gisella Tomita. Born on Maui, I am the daughter of Deaf parents, a Deaf sister and Deaf uncle, aunt and cousins. At the age of eight, my mother decided to move to the mainland for better educational opportunities for my younger sister and myself. Imagine being faced with the difficult decision as deaf parents: Where is the best place to educate my deaf children? In those days, Hawaii had such limited educational resources for deaf children.

I was then enrolled at the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick, Maryland where I found a rich experience growing up in a "utopian world of the Deaf." As a second generation graduate of Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., I am now a graduate student at the University of Hawaii's rehabilitation counseling program funded through the auspices of the Rehabilitation Services Administration grant. In addition to being a graduate student, I am also a full time employee as a vocational rehabilitation counselor working for the Deaf Services Section. It is with great personal honor that I serve as the liaison for the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind (HSDB) where I attended as a child. I am now able to give back to the community from what I learned from the mainland. Students at HSDB can do everything, except hear.

I support 100% the establishment of the Comprehensive Deaf Center. It will be a One-Stop Center to provide accurate, resourceful information and will develop a collaborative effort in the community. This will not be a micro-community, but a macro-community bringing all types of people together. This macro-community will attract parents of deaf children, service providers, employers and other friends in the hearing world. The Comprehensive Deaf Center will allow people who are deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind to connect with each other, develop a deep sense of their inner-culture which is Deaf culture and American Sign Language. This direct communication is vital for us to embrace self pride and cultural empathy.

The constant challenges faced by individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind is endured throughout society in general. Many of us have experienced these obstacles of communication and lack of cultural understanding and appreciation. We become isolated from the rest of society, unable to express ourselves in our own language, unable to self advocate for our needs. In most situations, we have to adapt to the modes of communication of hearing individuals in the workplace, in community events, at restaurants ordering food and so forth. We must write notes, read lips, point-point then nod, or simply gesture "I hear nothing." This lowers our self-esteem and become lost on the island.

We need HOPE.

Sincerely,



Gisella Tomita



TESTIMONY OF  
RODERICK J. MACDONALD

SUBMITTED TO  
THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE  
HAWAII STATE SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
SENATOR SUZANNE CHUN OAKLAND, CHAIR

RELATING TO SB 127  
"MAKING A GRANT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT  
AND OPERATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE DEAF CENTER."

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2011  
1:45 p.m, CONFERENCE ROOM 016  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL

Madam Chair, my name is Roderick Macdonald. I am originally from New England but have lived here in Hawaii for the past 14 years.

I have been blind since I was three years old, and have been profoundly deaf for most of my life. These are significant obstacles to getting ahead in life, but I have been very fortunate to have had a good education, good training and good support that enabled me to achieve most of my goals in life.

I am retired now, but for 30-odd years I worked as a Computer Specialist, Management Analyst, Policy Analyst, Rehabilitation Teacher for the Blind, and instructor at the Community College and University levels. I could never have done that without being taught to read without sight, listen without hearing and use a computer without either sight or hearing. I've been there, done that, and it would never have come to pass without the skills I learned along the way.

This brings me to the here-and-now: I am here to support, as strongly as I am able, the adoption of Senate Bill 127 for the establishment of a Comprehensive Deaf Center. I do not represent any agency or organization; I represent only me, myself and I. However, I am a consumer who has had the opportunity to benefit from the types of services this Center will be providing, and I cannot stress too strongly how important these training opportunities have been to me in the past.

Hawaii is a very special place. I use the word "special" as both a superlative and as a challenge, but I would like to focus on the challenging aspect of being a person with a disability in Hawaii.

When I taught my first class here in Hawaii, I had eight students from eight ethnic backgrounds; everyone was a minority of one. Each of these eight students came from a unique cultural background that influenced the individual's approach to learning, about disability and, most of all, about being a person.

I'd like to tell you about one of these students. She was 68 years old, very intelligent and with two advanced degrees from a Mainland university. She lost her eyesight as an adult, and whenever she visited her mother, the family expected her to enter the house through the back door, because they were embarrassed to have people seeing a blind person using a cane enter their front door.

Another of my students had been a school principal on one of the pacific islands who also lost his vision as an adult. He was very quiet during class and always said "yes" if i asked him if he understood the lesson. But I could tell he wasn't getting it, so we had a chat. He explained to me that he had been brought up to be quiet, respectful and never question authority. I in turn explained to him that I need him to participate in the learning experience by asking questions when he needed answers. We came to an agreement and when this man went home, one of the first things he did was to send me an email on his very new computer to thank me for helping him acquire the skills that enabled him to use a computer.

Yet another of my students told me that her upbringing taught her that a disability was punishment for sins committed in a past life. Another told me that it had been a major decision just to come to the agency seeking help, because her tradition held that it was the family that was responsible for "problems", not public agencies.

The challenges I have mentioned were encountered when I worked as a Rehabilitation Teacher for the Blind at Ho'opono, Hawaii's specialized training facility for the blind. Blindness is Ho'opono's specialty, but they have neither the understanding nor the expertise to deal with hearing loss. Yet the "other" sensory loss affects more people and can be every bit as much of an obstacle to participation and achievement. It was once observed that with blindness, one tends to miss things; but with deafness one tends to miss people.

Many people do not understand that hearing loss is often an "invisible" barrier. If you pass a deaf person on the street and say, "Good morning!", and the other person does not reply, you might well feel the person was rude in not returning your greetings. But the other person is deaf, did not hear your greeting, and very possibly may not have the ability to speak orally. I was once standing on a street corner preparing to cross when a man came up beside me and asked me a question. I did not even know he had asked me a question - I just continued watching the traffic. He became angry and hit me on the shoulder. When I turned to him he started pointing down the street, obviously asking something. I told him I was deaf and could not understand him, and then crossed the street.

Many people "assume" that deaf people can read lips. Some can, but most deaf people find lip reading difficult, at best. For most

deaf people communication is via American Sign Language, a unique language separate from English that does not have a written form, so even communicating via written notes can be confusing at times. And because English for most deaf people is a second language they have never heard, simple tasks like reading the instructions printed in English may not be quite so simple.

In many situations when a deaf person must interact with hearing individuals - situations that of necessity happen every day - the assistance of a sign language interpreter is needed. One might think that having a third party facilitate the communication between two languages is a great solution, and most of the time it is: The hearing person can speak as usual and the deaf person can "listen" as usual while following American Sign Language, and when it is the deaf person's turn to say something he or she can use ASL, the interpreter repeats the communication in spoken English, and we are all on the same page.

Unfortunately it doesn't always work as planned. While I was working at Ho'opono we had a case meeting to discuss braille instruction for a young deaf woman who was losing her vision. The young woman sat on one side of a long table while her interpreter sat opposite. Everything was fine until one of the staff, sitting beside the deaf woman, became annoyed that she was not looking at him - she kept watching her interpreter. He finally reached out and shook her by the shoulder, saying "Look at me when I am talking to you!" This was a well-trained professional; he knew quite a bit about vision loss, including the specific eye condition the young woman had, but he did not understand deafness. After that meeting the young woman decided she did not want braille instruction, yet that instruction would have been very useful to her as her progressive vision loss impaired her ability to read printed materials.

So how are deaf people to acquire the skills to work, learn and prosper? How are deaf people to learn to overcome stereotypes and prejudices that prevail in a hearing society? How do deaf people learn to write an effective resume in a language that is not their own? How do deaf people learn to feel positive about themselves, and how do deaf people help their family members overcome that embarrassment and even shame?

Ladies and Gentlemen, I suggest that you have the answer in front of you with the proposal to establish a Comprehensive Deaf Center to address these issues. Please accept my very strong support of this bill.

Senate Committee on Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 10, 2011

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

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

We are both deaf and members of the local deaf community. We saw the great need for a Comprehensive Deaf Center in Hawaii back in 1970's and advocated intensively for it. We are pleased to see that the center may finally become a reality -- even though 40 years late.

Comprehensive Deaf Center would provide a place for deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind to have a safe environment to socialize, obtain necessary services from agencies with staff who sign and are familiar with deaf people and deaf culture. The Center will allow deaf people to be as independent as possible by providing an accessible 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.

Please don't make us wait 40 years more to finally see the Comprehensive Deaf Center open for services to the local deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB127.

Sincerely,

Tien Fook Chung and Marianne Chung

Committee on Human Services  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 10, 2011  
1:45 p.m.  
Conference room 016

Re: Support for Senate Bill No. 127, Making a Grant to Establish and Operate a Comprehensive Deaf Center

Dear members of the Committee on Human Services,

Hi, my name is Ami Tsuji-Jones. I am Deaf myself and am a lecturer at Kapi'olani Community College. I was born and raised here in Honolulu and am very much involved in the Deaf community here. Also, I have been an advocate for the deaf and hard of hearing people for many years.

I am a domestic violence survivor, I went through many process in obtaining TRO (temporary restraining order), going to the court countless times, dealing with the police, making sure my son and I were protected, etc. It was a long ordeal for me. I was very fortunate to have a lawyer in my family. He helped me connect with another lawyer who used to work for DVAC (Domestic Violence Action Center). If it was not for him, I don't know what I would do! That experience made me realize that we really need to have services that are geared toward deaf and hard of hearing people who have been abused. What was the most difficult about my ordeal were the language barrier, deaf culture/awareness, and the knowledge about how to obtain legal help and resources in terms of domestic violence.

Hence my experience, my friend/colleague and I are hoping to set up advocacy services for the deaf abused women here in Hawai'i. We were hand picked to attend ADWAS (Abused Deaf Women Advocacy Services) training in Seattle, WA 2 years ago. The federal justice department funded the training. One of the criteria of the federal justice grant is that everyone who attended the training is to establish some kind of advocacy services for the abused deaf/hh people in their cities or home states. There are services for domestic violence survivors who are hearing, but we NEED to have services for deaf! Why? Because of the language and culture! I want to give you 2 examples: Did you know that one of the sign of being abused is when a hearing person deprive us of our essence language—ASL? A hearing person wouldn't sign when talking to a police is one form of controlling deaf person in an abused situation. Another excellent example is when we need to get deaf people's attention; one way is to tap on the shoulder. The abuser would tap very hard and claim that s/he was only trying to get the survivor's attention!

Another thing about setting up advocacy service for abused deaf people is to raise awareness and educate the public about how to deal with deaf people. We need to educate the police not to depend on the abuser to interpret for the deaf survivor because the abuser would be controlling what is being said between the police and survivors. We want to have deaf advocates to help the deaf survivors as they go through this difficult journey. I wish I had one! My advocate was hearing and she was wonderful, but I wish she was deaf, could sign ASL, and knew how to deal with deaf people and really advocate deaf people! That could have saved a lot of expenses, time, and most of all, lessen frustration and make me feel comfortable during this trying time!

That is where the Comprehensive Deaf Center here in Hawai'i's role would come in! The center would allow people who are deaf to have a safe environment to obtain necessary services from agencies who can communicate by using ASL (American Sign Language) and have knowledge and experience with deaf people and deaf culture, I want to ask you to please help us Hawai'i Deaf Community to ensure that center become a reality by appropriating start up funds to begin operations and establishment of services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,  
Ami Tsuji-Jones  
ASL Lecturer  
Kapi'olani Community College

February 8, 2011

Dear Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland,

My name is Allan Loo. I am writing to testify that I am strongly supporting the SB 127. I believe that the deaf comprehensive center is necessary to promote individual growth, social awareness, productivity, and equality by empowering deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind persons to be full participants in Hawaii's overall community. This has been the dream of the deaf community since the early 1970s.

I am working at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Deaf Services Section, as a Rehabilitation Assistant for over ten years. While working with the deaf individuals, I found that many of them are far behind in terms of their education and intelligent levels. Some of them lack the social and soft skills that are necessary to function in this society. Some of them have first to third grades English levels that are not sufficient to fulfill the requirements of certain job positions. The ability to read and comprehend the English language or any other language is very essential in every aspect of their life. Without their good language skills, I have seen, for example, that they could not fill out the application forms, or able to follow the instructions their employers provided. I often assist them in filling out the application forms or type for them online because they could not fully understand the questions well and/or unable to spell certain words correctly. This takes a lot of efforts and energy to assist them.

If the deaf center is established, I am confident to see the center will have the capacity to provide a wide range of individual services that may improve them to become full participants not only in Hawaii but anywhere in the world.

I hope that the Senate reconsiders this SB 127 and make it pass.

Aloha nui loa,

*Allan Loo*

## ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 03, 2011 2:13 PM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** chevy59@sprint.blackberry.net  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB127 on 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM SB127

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: Yes  
Submitted by: ED Chevy  
Organization: Individual  
Address: 91-537 koihala place ewa beach, hawaii 96706  
Phone: 866-928-9836  
E-mail: [chevy59@sprint.blackberry.net](mailto:chevy59@sprint.blackberry.net)  
Submitted on: 2/3/2011

**Comments:**

i strongly support the need of CDC. a deaf center is important to all the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind. the stages of its development are important. the deaf center can offer a comprehensive package, everything from health, education, counseling to servicing, training and assisting as well as preserving our deaf culture and heritage, a history of the deaf and hard of hearing since 1900's can educate the people of hawaii of our accomplishments, among all the cultural standards



## ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Friday, February 04, 2011 12:18 AM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** codasignhi@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB127 on 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM

**Categories:** Red Category

Testimony for HMS 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM SB127

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Jenny Blake  
Organization: Individual  
Address:  
Phone:  
E-mail: [codasignhi@gmail.com](mailto:codasignhi@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 2/4/2011

Comments:

## ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 08, 2011 11:36 PM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** tomlisa1@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB127 on 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM SB127

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Lisa Tom  
Organization: Individual  
Address: 5555 Kanau St. Honolulu, Hawaii 96821  
Phone: 808-373-8312  
E-mail: [tomlisa1@gmail.com](mailto:tomlisa1@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 2/8/2011

**Comments:**

Dear Senate and members of the Committee on Human Services,

My name is Lisa Tom and I am personally involved with developing a deaf center as a deaf advocate, member of Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland's Deaf and Blind Task Force, and member of the community.

I'm in support of this bill because it is a life long dream for deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind community to have this unique CDC as a one-stop center. I also want to carry Georgia Morikawa's dream that she saw much need in this kind of center for the community. I want to carry her legacy.

A CDC is an ideal for the community where we have the access to receive full information by using direct communication and enhance our self-esteem by learning new skills such as better interview skills. In addition, the center will provide varied services and programs that meet our needs in order to achieve our career goals and professional skills. Informal referral is one of the examples where people can get better resources such as professionals or organizations that serve for deaf and hard of hearing community. We used to have Hawaii Services on the Deafness (HSOD) but it was gone few years ago. We, deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind community need to have a safe environment for several reasons: socialization, obtaining necessary services from agencies who sign and being familiar with deaf people and deaf culture.

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.

We also hope to have partnership with business, agencies, and organizations.

Without this kind of center, where we will go...go to different places all over and it would consume our time and cost. One stop center would save our time and cost.

Please allow this center to become a reality by appropriating start up funds to begin operations and establishment of services.

Thank you for your consideration in favoring this bill.

Sincerely,

## ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 09, 2011 7:36 AM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** keano6@live.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB127 on 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM SB127

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Keano Nakamaejo  
Organization: Individual  
Address: 410 Ulupaina St Kailua, HI  
Phone: (808) 203-3374  
E-mail: [keano6@live.com](mailto:keano6@live.com)  
Submitted on: 2/9/2011

**Comments:**

I believe a Deaf Center would be a wonderful addition to our community. It would not only boost our economy and generate revenue for our state it would also serve as a place where the deaf and hard of hearing community can come together for instruction, services and socialization. I am in support of this bill and the emergence of a center for the deaf. It would truly help the deaf and hard of hearing population to know there is a place they can turn to for various forms of assistance and/or services, even vocational information or training, and most importantly for meeting others. A center could also help the hearing community to gain an awareness of this special population, allow for interaction and dispel fears and assumptions. Most importantly a deaf center would serve to strengthen and support the deaf, increase self esteem by building bonds of friendship and/or participating in the various programs it could offer, much like a one stop center. A deaf center really is a good idea for the state, for the deaf-hard of hearing populations and the hearing community as well.

## ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 09, 2011 9:20 AM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** finiakachita@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB127 on 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM SB127

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Finia Kachita  
Organization: Individual  
Address: 41-467 Hihimanu Street Waimanalo HI  
Phone: 8082865298  
E-mail: [finiakachita@gmail.com](mailto:finiakachita@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 2/9/2011

**Comments:**

I strongly agree that the deaf community should have a training center that focuses on their disability.

## ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

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**From:** pinkhawaii@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 09, 2011 9:34 AM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** Heinz-Guenther Pink  
**Subject:** Fwd: URGENT TESTIMONY FOR TOMORROW 2/10/11 FOR Senate Bill # 127, and Bill # 891.

[HMSTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:HMSTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)

**Herewith I submit my testimony for Senate Bill # 127, and Bill # 891.**

**Please print it out and submit as my written Testimony to be considered.**

- 1. After receiving training at the Helen Keller National Center on Long Island, NY, I became a very strict observer and speaker for the neglected needs in our deaf, blind, disabled and elderly community. I noticed that there are strict statistics for every veneral disease but absolutely NO statistics for our deaf, blind, handicapped disabled or elderly. I observed that there is always the same group of 30 to 50 do gooders in so called leadership to get the money for their cause, but absolutely nothing for the needy, they claim to represent. Therefore I would like to be your watch dog that justice will be done and that no big money is wasted in the name of the deaf and blind, like the pending present Senate Bill # 127 which I herewith oppose, to pay a total of \$800,400.- to establish a comrehensive deaf center: \$449,700.- for 2011-2012 and \$350,700.- for 2012 to 2013.**
- 2. Also I oppose SB 891 to spend \$449,700 to upgrade defunct Ho'opono. If those wasteful bills pass, they must be vetoed by our Governor.**
- 3. The now disfunctional Hooopono facility, where they have to blindfold the already legally blind to block out the last bit of vision they have to learn computers in a Micky Mouse way. This facility could easily be used for the requested planned Comprehensive Deaf Center if that is really necessary.**
- 4. For that much money we could properly educate and take care of thousands of deaf, blind or handicapped persons.**
- 5. Over 5 year ago, I gave an 80 minute long speech to the executives of Ho'opono and Mr. Joe Cordova from Vocational Rehab without ever getting an answer to any of my more than 50 enclosed questions to help the blind, deaf, elderly and handicapped. There is really no one who cares for us except for their same 30+ cronies. In our deaf blind committee of lovely Senator Chun-Oakland, we only have 2 certified legally deaf blind members. All others only hold out their hands for their own benefits as in many other agencies and committees. Questions are often ignored, the same as our sunshine law.**

**6. Here are my still unanswered questions submitted over 4 years ago on 1/27/07**

**Hello Mr. Cordova. I still did not get answers since 1/25/07!!! What happened??**

**Dear Mr. Cordova, Mr. Eveland and Mr. Fisk.  
April 6, 2007.**

Now it will be 3 months ago since I have given you a 1 hour and 20 minutes long presentation about the needs of the blind, deaf, elderly and handicapped at Ho'opono on 1/25/07 beginning at 2 PM. Since the requested screen enlarger for reading my notes was not made available until the last 20 minutes and no requested tape recordings were made, I have left all my unedited rough drafts of my lecture notes with Mr. Eveland and Mr. Fisk, so that any overlooked items could be reviewed and addressed by all of you. There was no objection or correction during or after my presentation. Therefore I would like to hear from you, Sam Fisk and Dave Eveland, which of my positive suggestions will be acted upon and implemented and also which items are rejected as to be too difficult to resolve by you.

I do realize that agencies have their areas of expertise and purpose, but advocacy for our concerns can and must be done FOR US by any and all funded agencies for the certified handicapped, because these agencies have more clout than individuals or smaller groups. Agencies simply cannot pass the BUCK and only attend to those areas that give them the most profitable Grants and Funds for only their own benefits.

We must demand reliable statistics for all certified groups with different handicapps. We just could not be less important than those statistically reported groups with self-acquired sexual transmitted diseases, or are we??? United we stand; therefore we cannot simply ignore other groups that are blind.

It was agreed that we must have better communication between our various agencies and the certified handicapped they represent. Therefore, free high- speed Internet access must be provided with open bulletin boards, even with very cheap web cams, for access by our certified handicapped.

Presently, our very expensive Video Relay Services are subsidized by the FCC and by a small mandatory contribution from all telephone users. Now we have useless Video Relay Cameras without the free high- speed Internet access. You have the power to lobby for us. This Service alone will contribute tremendously to our vocational rehabilitation, education and usefulness. It will save the government many millions of dollars in VRS and Education. It will encourage the very slow and expensive VRS process of the deaf to improve their speech by speaking and signing ASL simultaneously. The millions of elderly, who are rapidly losing their hearing, could finally learn ASL, America's third most common language.

You will find as attachments my discussed issues and old BAD HELP ARTICLE; I left with Ho'opono, for your comments. Just ignore any duplication and consolidate all issues. Please e-mail me your answers and criticism of my attached lecture notes and given presentation within the next ten days, that I can pass them on to the waiting legislative committees.

Let me thank you again for the 80 minute presentation, you allowed me to give. With LOVE OF ALOHA TO ALL

I remain

Heinz-Guenther Pink, [pink@hawaii.edu](mailto:pink@hawaii.edu) or [pinkhawaii@gmail.com](mailto:pinkhawaii@gmail.com).

Ho'opono' s needed changes are advocacy.

1           What I am doing here today, should be done by Ho'opono. I am giving you the voice of the many silent blind and deaf. I am not here for my self, because my life expectancy is very short.

2           There must be accountability of agencies' total income and expenses without puffery.

3           There must be reliable statistics on the blind and deaf, to gain their political recognition.

- 4 Voting machines for the deaf, blind and handicapped are a needless expense and should be replaced with absentee registration and absentee voting.
- 5 We need advocacy for less expensive equipment, vision, hearing aids, and the new \$100. Laptop computers and programs.
- 6 We must object to the many overpriced equipment for the blind and deaf. Ask the deaf / blind first for their recommendations.
- 7 We need to look out for and negotiate for cheap \$10. Hearing devices combined with a recorder, frequency selectors, audio, and telephone and microphone inputs. It is hard to keep track of so many separate, different devices. Replace all those proposed Mickey Mouse devices.
- 8 We need more advocacy for the needs of the handicapped.
- 9 We need to ask foreign countries for help in development and manufacturing of needed equipment and programs.
- 10 I-Communicate, Zoom Text and Jaws are a few examples.
- 11 We need to stop using blind education with hindering blindfolds. Remember that 90% of all legally blind can and will see a little something.
- 12 We need to cut out expensive trips, bureaucracy for Voc. Rehab. And useless surveys. HKNC as example. Down-streaming and video conferencing can take its place. Too much is wasted.
- 13 We need to lobby for free high-speed Internet access for education. The SEC and public are now supporting expensive VRS services. Down streaming, down loading with web-cams is in and here already. We can save millions of Dollars in Education and wasted library cassettes.
- 14 Let Ho'opono install downloadable programs with the common password aloha, which can later be changed.
- 15 Lobby Microsoft for easier program and password installations.
- 16 Inform us about web- and chat lines, such as speed sight, Eyeball chat, goggle talk, Yahoo with voice etc. help with installation.
- 17 We need collection centers for all used hearing and vision aids and equipment. Even contact the morticians.
- 18 The mentally challenged have a social club, why not expand Ho'opono as our social club. Our current elderly blind program is a farce with only 3 members.
- 19 We need to stop nepotism and favored hiring for self- interest.
- 20 \$300,000 vendor positions must be changed every six months or the profit over \$85,000 must benefit all blind.
- 21 Hostile insider groups must be stopped from cutting e-mail access and party invitations.
- 22 Allow us to attend handicapped functions for free, without high admission or forced expensive lunch costs.
- 23 Provide a shuttle bus or bus service access to Ho'opono and other functions for the blind, like the inaccessible country club party sponsored by the Lions
- 24 Then invite all blind to parties, not only the selected few.
- 25 Have at least a weekly updated bulletin board for all functions.
- 26 Install an uncensored forum or opinion board in public places and on the Internet. Only obscenities may be deleted.
- 27 Ho'opono's optometry department must certify the legally blind and not send them back to expensive MD's.
- 28 Ho'opono must enforce THEIR mission statement to serve ALL BLIND regardless of their financial status and advertise openly all entitlements without making us beg on our knees.

- 29            **A blind cane is our main tool. Let everyone get a needed replacement free.**
- 30            **Ho'opono is pushing high priced equipment development and does not advocate and lobby for affordable equipment.**
- 31            **Get us very cheap double keyboard adapters to communicate with the deaf blind. Maybe develop a less expensive Braille board too o avoid unnecessary touching through tactile signing.**
- 32            **We need a legal help agency to protect us against the rampant fraud. Speed up dragging investigations of complaints.**
- 33            **Our 2006 Ho'opono Newsletter gave us costly fraudulent job referrals. Check it out first, before you recommend. Get us the real jobs we want, without paralyses of analyses.**
- 34            **Stop the bragging and puffery in the newsletters. Are Camp Erdman and Haleakala excursions the only accomplishments of Ho'opono for the year?**
- 35            **Is the dormitory for outer Island visitors really necessary? Can't we train trainers from there?**
- 36            **Advisory Boards and Council must be taken seriously and not only be used for grant collecting endorsements. Aloha to All H.G. Pink**
- Blind and deaf Issues.**
- We need Statistics**
- Fast and/organized Communication**
- Free high speed inter net connection**
- Self Education through inter net**
- Education through PBC and the Inter-net**
- Effective Bulletin boards regular and e-mail**
- Free expression, blogs and columns**
- Specialized short Education by appointments (AIM, IM, BLOGS, FAQs ETC.)**
- Not tiring long classroom hours**
- Better applied funding, 90% to handicapped, not to administration**
- More social events at empty Ho'opono**
- Better Health, Dental and Prescription Care**
- True overall Advocacy programs for all handicapped**
- Better complaint channels for handicapped**
- Helpful devices at much lower prices**
- Publication of all free entitlements**
- No Membership fees and admissions FOR THEIR CLUBS, ORGs, SHOWS**
- Disclosure of funding/donation distribution by all agencies**
- True supervised mission statements by all agencies**
- Double Punishment for fraud and crimes against Handicapped**
- Collection of used Hearing and vision equipment.**
- Aloha to All H.G. Pink**

**Heinz-Guenther Pink**

**Advocate and program evaluator for the blind, deaf and handicapped.**

**Member: NFB Communication Council  
and ATRC Advisory Council of the State**

**Member of Senator Chun Oakland's Deaf-Blind Task Force.**

**Co-founder: College of Commerce 1962, Founder: Computer College of Hawaii**



**since 1963, [pinKHawaii@gmail.com](mailto:pinKHawaii@gmail.com)  
410 Magellan Ave. Apt.1002, Honolulu, HI. 96813 ,  
Tel 808: 537-1875 or PURPLE 808 791-3464**

## ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 09, 2011 1:13 PM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** susankroe@aol.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB127 on 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/10/2011 1:45:00 PM SB127

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: susan Kroe-Unabia  
Organization: Individual  
Address: 7086 hawaii kai dr honolulu, hi  
Phone: 808-295-0647  
E-mail: [susankroe@aol.com](mailto:susankroe@aol.com)  
Submitted on: 2/9/2011

**Comments:**

Comprehensive Deaf Center--House Bill (HB514) and Senate Bill (SB127). I STRONGLY support the creation of the Comprehensive Deaf Center. Please allot money to help create a central place for deaf people to be serviced by an array of agencies. Deaf people have unique needs and people who are well versed in sign language are best to serve them. The creation of the Center would be a hub with coordinated agencies serving the deaf.

MAHALO

Susan Kroe-Unabia