

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



PATRICIA McMANAMAN
DIRECTOR

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 29, 2012

MEMORANDUM:

TO: The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2435, S.D. 1 - RELATING TO INFORMATION ACCESS**

Hearing: Thursday, March 29, 2012, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division of the Department of Human Services to contract for a telephone-based service to provide access to timely print media.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports S.B. 2435. We ask that if this appropriation is approved that it does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget.

It is essential for our clients who are print disabled to have access to the Newsline service. Print disabled clients include, but are not limited to, clients who have blindness and visual impairments; dyslexia; or have learning disabilities. The Newsline service allows these clients to have access to real-time information such as job listings, local and national media information, postings of our public hearings that solicit commentary on our state plans and many other types of information necessary for our clients to live independently.

Access to the Newslite service is already available for persons on Oahu. This appropriation will provide access for residents on the Neighbor Islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to this Committee.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 101 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
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March 29, 2012

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Senate Bill 2435, SD1 – Relating to Information Access

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports the intent of Senate Bill 2435, SD1 Relating to Information Access that appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services' Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division to provide access to current information for individuals who have print disabilities such as visual impairments, dyslexia or physical impairments that prevent direct access to conventional print media.

On a daily basis, the public has access to current information and news through various sources such as the local daily newspaper, radio, television, etc. Having daily local and national newspapers and various periodicals available through a telephone-based information access service will make similar information available to individuals who have limited access to print media.

We defer to the Department of Human Services regarding the funding necessary to provide the service.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair
Committee on Finance
Hawaii State Capitol
415 Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 29, 2012

Re: Support for SB 2435, SD1, Relating to Information Access-Newsline

Dear Representative Marcus Oshiro and members of the Committee on Finance

My name is Nani Fife, and I am a user of Newsline, because I cannot read print due to my sight impairment. I have used Newsline services since 1993 and access the following publications to get information about current events: Star Advertiser and many other newspapers. If Newsline is not funded, I will not have access to the information I need to be aware of what is happening in the local community or at a national level. I am President of the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii (NFBH), a mother, a grandmother and I work full time for the City & County of Honolulu. I am also a strong advocate for the blind of Hawaii. My experience with Newsline has been positive providing me valuable information in my daily busy personal and professional life.

The National Federation of the Blind has designed this revolutionary system to receive digital transmissions from newspapers on the morning of publication, convert this information into computer-generated synthetic speech, and transmit the information to a Local Service Center (LSC) which blind persons can call on touch tone phones.

Many of our blind members use this service on a daily basis and without the funding for the Newsline services many blind individuals will lose their independence and the right to information.

In conclusion, I am respectfully asking your support for SB 2435,SD1.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nani Fife, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii
nanifife@aol.com

Brandon Young

Newsline Testimony

March 27, 2012

SB 2435 Information Access dealing with the Newsline telephone service for the blind.

My name is Brandon Young and I am testifying in support of this measure. I am a member of the National Federation of the Blind and the person that has been sheparding this bill for the past two years. A few members met with Representative Oshiro in October of 2010 to present this matter to him and to receive his support. He seemed supportive of the program at the time and wondered why the Governor had not included this funding in his budget to the legislature already. The Newsline service is very important and is something that we need to keep here in Hawaii. I will come and testify in person and I thank you for your support. I would hope that you and your committee would hear our concerns and pass this measure forward.

Sincerely,

Brandon Young

FINTestimony

m: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 28, 2012 11:02 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: mota1252@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2435 on 3/29/2012 10:00:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 3/29/2012 10:00:00 AM SB2435

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Milton Ota
Organization: Individual
E-mail: mota1252@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/28/2012

Comments:

Hello, my name is Milton Ota, a member of the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii and the NFB-NEWSLINE Sponsor Representative for the organization. I'm writing to you to ask that this bill SB2435 SD1 be passed so that I can keep up with the local news, national and international news, health publication that I read monthly, and news about technology which I also read on a monthly basis. Newsline has also been able to keep me abreast of activities happening in our community.

There is a lot of information that can be found on the NFB-NEWSLINE service--over 300 different local and national publications available including Target Store Ads wherever there is a Target Store, Job listing which is localized by ZIP Code.

Not having funding will mean that we will lose access to this wealth of information that would not be available anywhere else and at an up-to-date manner.

Again thank you very much for taking this testimony and again, I urge you to please pass SB2435 SD1 during this session.

Milton Ota

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 28, 2012 5:12 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: caota4@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2435 on 3/29/2012 10:00:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 3/29/2012 10:00:00 AM SB2435

Conference room: 308
Testifier position:
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Charlene Ota
Organization: Individual
E-mail: caota4@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/28/2012

Comments:

I am writing in support of this bill. Newsline gives access to people who, for whatever reason, cannot read print, whether they are blind or have a learning disability, etc. This is the only way many blind people can read the newspaper and it keeps us connected with the day-to-day news in our community. Newsline also gives people access to job listings which is extremely important as there is no other readily-accessible way to read job listings if you can't read the paper. There is also information available that is important for blind people in the local community as well as TV listings and access to many other newspapers around the nation. Please make the news available to blind people along with others who are not able to read printed materials. This is an important part of our daily lives. Thank you for your consideration. Respectfully, Charlene Ota