

LATE

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SB583
CPN
Friday, February 11, 2011
8:30 a.m.
Room 229

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Vice Chair

February 10, 2011

Re: SB583—Relating to Cable Television Systems

In Support

Dear Senator Baker, Senator Taniguchi, and members of the Committee:

When Hawaii's public access television system was first established back in the '90s, an experienced consultant was brought in from California to work with committees and the state government. This is the procedure that had been followed also in most other states at that time.

The process took time to develop stakeholder buy-in. I served on one of the committees for a short while and was impressed with the expertise that was assembled and the dedication applied to the process.

The hard work paid off handsomely. Hawaii's public access channels, as we know here on Oahu, have inspired countless individuals and organizations to learn to make and present videos. Facilities located in schools not only serve the public but provide a unique service to students. As to the government part of the deal, those on Neighbor Islands or far away on the North Shore of Oahu are now able to watch many state and city hearings and so participate in the legislative process.

I am grateful to be able to stay home in my pajamas watching the House Finance Committee take testimony until 4:30 a.m., or to record hearings to watch later. Now anyone in Hawaii can click on a schedule and watch previous hearings on demand.

It was a thoughtful, deliberative and wise process that gave us the capabilities we have today, and the responsibilities that come with it have been fulfilled by the current providers very efficiently, in my view. Of course, as in public radio, there are those who want to see things done differently. There should be some understanding that experience is crucially important to success, and that few organizations nationwide do, in fact, have public access broadcasting experience.

That's why it is important to clarify through this bill that DCCA may build on the work of the initial committees and provide us with public access TV services without interruption and of a high quality. TV channels are a valuable commodity, and commercial pressure to acquire them must be avoided at all costs. Awarding the contracts through bidding is not only disruptive but potentially a major setback.

We have something good going and this bill will permit DCCA to keep it working for us all.

Larry Geller