

SB 893

Thursday, February 24, 2011

Re: Support for SB893 Relating to information access.

Dear Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

my name is Milton Ota, and I am the Sponsor Agent of the NFB-Newsline® program for the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii. I'm writing to you to ask that SB 893 SD1 be passed with amendments changing all reference related to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Services for the Blind to the version with reference to the Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB).

I have been using the service since 2000 and find that over the years the service has grown. I receive the Star-Advertiser, the Wall Street Journal, Diabetes Self Management and PCWorld on a regular basis via e-mail. I also on occasion check the television schedule to see what is coming up on TV.

- Reading the Star-Advertiser give me access to full stories of headlines that you hear on TV and radio
- Reading diabetes Self Management helps me to keep up with the latest information on how to better manage my diabetes
- The Wall Street Journal keeps me up to date with technology news and world events
- PCWorld allows me to read more detailed information on technology trends

The full benefit of using the NFB-Newsline® service means that I don't have to go to the different publication websites and have to deal with advertisements, pop-ups and a very busy and cluttered website just to read what I want.

At times I will also go to the NFB-Newsline® secure website and find an article from a previous issue of one of the publications that I have read to reread it or get it sent back to me via e-mail.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Milton Ota
NFB-Newsline® Sponsor Agent
National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii

From: Brandon Young [young.brandon4@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 10:51 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Subject: RE: testimony for SB 893 SD 1

Dear Chair Ige and Vice Chair Kadami and colleagues, I am writing in support of SB 893 SD1. This is a bill that will help blind people and others who have problems with reading print. As someone who has lost sight over the years, Newsline has become a wonderful service for me. This bill would create a mechanism to fully fund the Newsline service for the blind and print impaired. The Newsline service is a electronic database of newspapers and magazines from across the country. The consumers of the service can access this service by using their telephone or via the internet. I would hope that you would vote in support of passing this measure onto the entire Senate. so that you can help in the lives of blind people.

Sincerely Yours,
Brandon Young
NFB of Honolulu Secretary

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 3:50 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: kati.did@hawaiiantel.net
Subject: Testimony for SB893 on 2/24/2011 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for WAM 2/24/2011 9:00:00 AM SB893

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Katie Stinnett
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: kati.did@hawaiiantel.net
Submitted on: 2/23/2011

Comments:
Very Strong Support

TO: Senator
David Y. Ige, Chair
Ways and Means (WAM)
16th Senatorial District
Hawaii State Capitol Room 215

415 Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

phone: 808-586-6230

fax: 808-586-6231

sendige@Capitol.hawaii.gov

From:
Virgil Stinnett
2943 Kalakaua Ave. Apt. # 304
Honolulu, HI 96815
Cell # 722-4243

Date: February 23, 2011

Re: SB893, SD1

As a blind individual I do strongly support S.B. 893, SD1. I strongly believe the importance of this bill for the purpose of access to information such as the newspaper and many other periodicals. In allowing the current law to be amended so that the Newline service can be funded. This will enable the Blind, Deaf Blind and people who are print disable to access the things that are not easily available to us. Newline is a program that helps me read the Newspaper like everyone who is sighted. It allows me to read today's paper at the same time as everyone else. In these times it is very crucial to be up-dated with what is happening in our World, Nationally, and locally. NewsLine allows people who have a difficult time accessing the Newspaper through normal means. It also gives, Blind and visually impaired individuals an opportunity to be able to interact with their peers at work and in their community with current events. Students are able to do research for school which requires them to learn about current events that are in their daily paper.

You might have questions such as:

1 Can't the Blind access the Newspaper via the internet?

Answer: Yes and No.

There are those in the blind community just as in the sighted community who can and have the ability to do so. Then there are those who can't, because they just don't have the ability or, because they don't have the means. It is also the way that the Deaf Blind can

access the paper using the Newslines service and download the paper to their Braille display. This is how the Deaf Blind can access the paper.

2 What about Braille?

Answer No. It is not reasonable it would cost more to print it in Braille, and it would take more time, which means that then the Blind individual would not be able to access the Newspaper as quickly as their sighted peers. So today's News to the Blind would be yesterdays or even last weeks News.

3. Who else can use this service? Anyone who is registered with the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicap qualify. Also anyone who is print disable can use this service.

It just seems to make common sense to help keep an informational resource available, when you have the power to do so.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 11:13 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: SongofEagle@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB893 on 2/24/2011 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for WAM 2/24/2011 9:00:00 AM SB893

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Guywood Dela Cruz
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: SongofEagle@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/23/2011

Comments:
February 22, 2011

Senator Ige
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Baratania St.
Honolulu, HI

Dear Senator Ige and Members of the WAM committee.

I am in strong support of Senate Bill SB 893, SD1 NewsLine. I've been using NewsLine for about a month. I am visually impaired and found the service very valuable. I use to ask sighted family and friends for there help if and when they had the time to read me the news paper and want adds and now I don't have to inconvenience them any more. I can be independent and search local and national news papers, magazines, job listings ect. I ask you to please be in support of this Bill so not only myself, but others who are print disabled can use the same serviced and be independent too.

Sincerely,

Guywood Dela Cruz

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 11:30 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: finiakachita@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB893 on 2/24/2011 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for WAM 2/24/2011 9:00:00 AM SB893

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Finia Kachita
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: finiakachita@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/23/2011

Comments:
Wednesday February 23, 2011

Committee: Wam

Dear members of the Wam committee.

My name is Finia Kachita, and I am a user of Newsline, because I cannot read print due to my disability. I strongly support SB893-SD1 for the following reasons.

I use Newsline services to access my local paper, the Star-Advertiser and other current events, including Job listings in Hawaii or on the Mainland. If Newsline is not funded, I will not have access to the information I need to be aware of what is happening in Hawaii or nationally.

You might say, "have someone read the publications to me". I could do that, but is it really necessary to put such a burden on someone, let alone myself especially if I have to look for someone to read me the Papers?.

Let alone that it may be long after the time the paper and information was originally published?

If Newsline is no more, it would be like taking away my rights from me. How can we the disabled community be a part of society if we are limited to the necessary tools we need so we can live a normal life. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully yours,

Finia Kachita.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 11:52 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: kam.js005@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB893 on 2/24/2011 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for WAM 2/24/2011 9:00:00 AM SB893

Conference room: 211
Testifier position:
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jacob S.Kamaunu
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: kam.js005@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/23/2011

Comments:

I tstrongly support bill SB 893, SD 1, and I highly incourage that the measure be approved. Mot only for for the sake of the blind community but for anyone who seeks to improve their quality of life. Thats what newsline does for me as a blind person. It allows me to have local, national, worldly news, and a whole lot more at the palm of my hands. It does wonders for me with time manadgment in my world of blindness. Thank you for time.

From: Sam Fisk [sfisk@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 4:24 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Subject: SB 893, SD1 - Relating to Information Access

I strongly support SB893 SD1 with amendments.

Sam Fisk
91-855 Poowai Place
Ewa Beach, HI 96706

2011-02-23 SB893 SD1 Revised testimony.txt

Dear Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and the members of the Committee on Ways & Means,

I am in favor of the proposed revision to SB893 SD1 to substitute the Disability Communication Access Board (DCAB) for the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Blind Services..

I use a system to have timely information from local and national newspapers, local agencies and organizations, national magazines, TV listings, and job listings read to me over the phone. It's helpful because I can call a direct or toll-free number any time of the day to access this material, skip or repeat articles or sections, and so on.

Before Newsline, I had to wait for someone to read the print information to me, or I scanned it into my computer, which was time-consuming and not always accurate. However, since the publishers upload the files to the system, I get accurate information in a timely manner--usually around the time the newspapers or magazines go to press.

It's important that this service be free to the individual subscribers, including a toll-free number, because of the 70% unemployment rate among the blind. Also, although many newspapers now offer some of their articles online for free, accessing the full papers over the phone is more affordable (especially with services like Lifeline) and more portable.

However, with on-demand access to news articles and job listings, print-disabled people can stay current and find employment. (In HI, those of us who are employed earn an average of about \$20 / hour...)

On the other hand, there's a direct number for those of us who have free long-distance, and those of us with internet access can also cut down on toll costs to the system by accessing the material on a password-protected website or download it in a specialized format to read on portable devices only available to the print-disabled.

Finally, this system is available to all print-disabled Americans (not just the blind, but also people with dyslexia, certain physical disabilities, elderly people who've lost enough sight to become legally blind, etc), but each state pays for their own citizens' access. We hope to have a stable source of funds because it's been difficult to fund Newsline from various private and government sources in HI, but if we can't find enough funding, we'll have to "go dark" until we have enough again for HI's subscriptions.

I personally experienced this. I signed up for Newsline when it first came online (in 1999 or 2000) while attending the Louisiana Center for the Blind. However, when we moved so my husband could pursue his PhD, we learned that Arkansas didn't have Newsline. I was relieved when we moved to CA, which had Newsline, and again when we moved back home around the time Newsline came online in HI in 2005. Having had to do without, I know how others will feel if we can't fund this essential service.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ronalene White - Kahalu'u, HI
VP, Anuenue Chapter
National Federation of the Blind of Hawai'i