

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



PATRICIA MCMANAMAN
DIRECTOR

PANKAJ BHANOT
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

March 18, 2011

TO: The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Interim Director

SUBJECT: **SB 893, S.D.3 - RELATING TO INFORMATION ACCESS**

Hearing: Friday, March 18, 2011, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to direct the Disability and Communication Access Board to establish and maintain a telephone-based audible information access service to provide to daily newspapers and other periodicals in an audio medium; makes appropriations from the Wireless Enhanced 911 Fund to the Disability and Communication Access Board Special Fund to establish to the information access service.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this bill. We defer to the Wireless Enhanced 911 Board and the Department of Accounting and General Services on the fiscal implications of this bill.

Telephone-based audible information access is an important service for many individuals to provide time-sensitive information such as a local daily newspaper. Expanded access for our print-disabled clients is essential through the Newline service for job listings, local and national media information, postings of our public

hearings that solicit commentary on our State Plans and many other important information supportive of our clients to enable them to support themselves through employment and lead quality lives.

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



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 101 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V/TDD) • Fax (808) 586-8129

March 18, 2011

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Senate Bill 893, SD3 – Relating to Information Access

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports the Newsline service in general.

Senate Bill 893 establishes a mechanism to provide funding for a telephone-based audible information access service, otherwise known as "Newsline" to provide access to daily newspapers in an audio medium for persons who are blind and visually impaired. The current contract via the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division will expire on September 30, 2011.

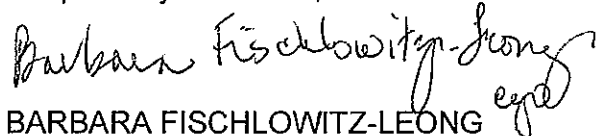
Senate Draft 3 designated DCAB as the agency to receive and expend funds for Newsline in this biennium. We do so with the understanding that this is an interim solution for the biennium (two years). We cannot speak to the sufficiency of the \$80,000 or the source of the funds.

We request the following amendments:

- Lines 14 to 17 on page 2 be deleted. Writing rules will delay any contract implementation, per our Deputy Attorney General, and are not necessary to procure a contract, as the details are very specific in the law;
- Section 6 be amended to take effect upon approval and to sunset June 30, 2013; and
- The Department of Human Services prepare a report to the 2012 Legislature with recommendations for ongoing funding for the service with a permanent home.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,



BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson
Legislative Committee



FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

Senate Bill 893 SD3

March 17, 2011

House committee on Health
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Support for SB893, SD3 Relating to information access.

Dear Members of the House Committee on Health,

My name is Milton Ota and I am the NFB-Newsline® Sponsor Agent for the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii and also a user of Newsline®, because I cannot read print due to my disability. I have used Newsline services since January, 2000, and access the following publications to get information about current events:

- Start-Advertiser;
- The Wall Street Journal;
- Diabetes Self Management;
- Local Television Schedule;
- Local happenings via the Local Channel

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 like reading news about technology, business, and health. Having access to reading these publications allows me to speak and contribute in discussions with friends about trends that are happening and get more detailed information that the television and radio newscast don't provide. I encourage you to pass the bill out of committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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



HIAN Member

JOHN T. HAYS
Interpreter/Translator
Post Office Box 1855
Honolulu, HI 96805-1855
Telephone (808) 947-6013; Fax (808) 951-7904
e-mail johnthays@gmail.com



March 17, 2011

To: State of Hawai'i - House of Representatives
The Twenty-Sixth Legislature
Regular Session of 2011

Attention of the Committee on Health
Chair - Rep. Ryan I. Yamane
Vice Chair - Rep. Dee Morikawa, and
Members of the Committee
Via e-mail HLTtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

From: John T. Hays

Re: Testimony in favor of SB 893, SD3 (SSCR599)

I have served as an interpreter and translator in the federal and state courts of Hawai'i for approximately 26 years. From 1991 to the present, I have undergone 14 surgeries (5 on the left eye and 9 on the right eye) for hereditary defects in my eyes, and I am currently classified as legally blind, though I continue to carry out interpretation and translation jobs, with the assistance of specialized hardware and software. I am an active member of the National Federation of the Blind, Honolulu Chapter.

In order to continue to be informed on current events and on the work that I am still able to perform to help others in the pursuit of justice, I require assistance in the form of audio transmissions of the news and other services as described in SB 893.

Accordingly, I would like to express my support of this legislation, in the strongest possible terms.

John T. Hays

morikawa2 - Grant

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 1:02 AM
To: HLTtestimony
Cc: swartzg001@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for SB893 on 3/18/2011 9:30:00 AM

Testimony for HLT 3/18/2011 9:30:00 AM SB893

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: gregory swartz
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: swartzg001@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 3/16/2011

Comments:
DCAB's role is to ensure that public and private organizations respect the rights of the disabled, not to provide direct services to the disabled.

morikawa2 - Grant

From: Brandon Young [young.brandon4@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 8:28 AM
To: HLTtestimony
Subject: Re: testimony

Dear Chair Ryan Yamane and others of the Health Committee, I am writing in support of SB 893 SD3. I am an avid user of the Newsline service that we are supporting with this bill. I will be present to testify orally. I would hope that the members of this committee would help in the cause of blindness and become our colleagues for future measures so that we can have a permanent funding source for our Newsline service.

Thank you

Brandon Young
NFB of Honolulu

morikawa2 - Grant

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 10:04 AM
To: HLTtestimony
Cc: finiakachita@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB893 on 3/18/2011 9:30:00 AM

Testimony for HLT 3/18/2011 9:30:00 AM SB893

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Finia Kachita
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: finiakachita@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/16/2011

Comments:
3/18/2011
9:30 am
SB893 SD3
Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair

Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

Rep. Della Au Belatti

Rep. John M. Mizuno

Rep. Faye P. Hanohano

Rep. Jessica Wooley

Rep. Jo Jordan

Rep. Corinne W.L. Ching

Rep. Chris Lee

Rep. Kymberly Marcos Pine

Dear all:

My name is Finia Kachita, and I am a user of Newslite, because I cannot read print due to my disability. I strongly support SB893-SD3 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.

morikawa2 - Grant

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 8:27 AM
To: HLTtestimony
Cc: SongofEagle@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB893 on 3/18/2011 9:30:00 AM

Testimony for HLT 3/18/2011 9:30:00 AM SB893

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Guywood Dela Cruz
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: SongofEagle@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/17/2011

Comments:
3/18/2011
9:30 am
SB893 SD3
Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair

Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

Rep. Della Au Belatti

Rep. John M. Mizuno

Rep. Faye P. Hanohano

Rep. Jessica Wooley

Rep. Jo Jordan

Rep. Corinne W.L. Ching

Rep. Chris Lee

Rep. Kymerly Marcos Pine

Dear all:

I am in strong support of SB893, SD3 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

morikawa2 - Grant

From: Ann Lemke [lemke@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 9:44 AM
To: HLTtestimony
Cc: 'Nani Fife'; 'Virgil Stinnett'; 'Ronalene'; 'Charlene Ota'; mota@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: testimony in support of S.B. 893 S.D.3

Honorable Committee Chair and Members,

I am writing to urge your support of S.B.893 S.D.3. This legislation will support the provision of access to current newspapers and magazines and other time-sensitive print information by print-disabled people in the state of Hawaii. Those of us who cannot read standard printed material include blind and visually-impaired, dyslexic, traumatic brain injured, and persons with other kinds of physical and neurological disabilities. It is noteworthy that this is the only kind of media access system that can also be accessed by persons who are both blind and deaf.

I depend on having timely access to printed media information to be an informed, contributing member of my community. I often meet older individuals who are losing their vision who believe that they will no longer be able to read the newspaper. When I tell them about the Newsline service, they are both amazed and hopeful as they face vision loss.

Ann Lemke, Ph.D., Counselor
lemke@hawaii.edu
808-235-7448

morikawa2 - Grant

From: Ronalene [mailto:rwhite.zis@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 10:39 AM
To: HLTtestimony
Cc: Nani Fife; Virgil Stinnett; Ann Lemke; Charlene Ota; mota; white.gerry@gmail.com
Subject: testimony in support of SB893 SD3

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Morikawa, and the members of the House Committee on Health,

I am in favor of SB893 SD3.

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

There's a literacy crisis among the blind in America!
You can be part of the solution. Visit:
<http://braille.org>
to learn about the problem & how YOU can help.

morikawa2 - Grant

From: Charlene Ota [caota@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 11:02 AM
To: 'Ronalene'; HLTtestimony
Cc: 'Nani Fife'; 'Virgil Stinnett'; 'Ann Lemke'; 'mota'; white.gerry@gmail.com
Subject: RE: testimony in support of SB893 SD3

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Morikawa, and the members of the House Committee on Health,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 893 SD3. I have been a NFB Newsline subscriber for about 10 years. It's been of great benefit to me to be able to readily and easily read the local newspaper as well as other national publications when I have the time and inclination to do so.

One really special situation comes to mind. Last year when our Rainbows Softball team got to go to the World Series, what could be more exciting!
Yes, I could follow the games on the radio and/or TV but I discovered something really special that occurred daily during that time in the newspaper. The catcher, Katie Grimes, sent in articles about her experience along with the other women that was very personal and gave a perspective of the whole experience you'd never have if you couldn't read her articles. You can bet that everyday I had to get on the phone and check the paper to get her latest updates and I looked forward to each and every one.

On a day to day basis, NFB Newsline gives me access not only to the local paper, but to newspapers all across the nation. If I'm traveling, I can check the local paper at my destination, I can read the news in the areas where my family lives, etc. But, with NFB Newsline, I also have access to extensive job listings if and when I need to find a job; I can read many national magazines in various different interest areas and I can even check to see what's on TV so that I can pick and choose my programs and not miss my favorites. NFB Newsline also has a local channel where news that is pertinent to blind people in Hawaii can be posted and easily accessed and local agencies can put up their newsletters and special announcements as well.

Please support NFB Newsline as it is a great and vital resource to people with print disabilities in Hawaii.

Respectfully,
Charlene Ota
Honolulu, HI
Secretary, Anuenue Chapter
National Federation of the Blind of Hawai'i

There's a literacy crisis among the blind in America!
You can be part of the solution. Visit:
<http://braille.org>
to learn about the problem & how YOU can help.

To: Chair of the House HLT Committee

From: Courtney T. Tagupa
808-447-8919 Phone

Day of Hearing: Friday, 3/18/11, 9:30AM, House Conference Room 329

Position on SB 893 SD3: Oppose

Introduction: Courtney T. Tagupa, Representing Self

Measure: SB893 SD3

I am testifying against SB 893 SD3 for the following reasons:

1. The Wireless E911 funds are specifically earmarked to provide the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) with the necessary equipment to provide technical functionality for the Wireless Enhanced 911 service pursuant to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) order (§138-5, HRS).
2. The \$0.66 per month flat rate surcharge on mobile phone users are specifically for enhanced 911 services.
3. The Wireless E911 Board is already subjected to assessments 5% on revenue (§36-27, HRS) and approximately 2.65% on disbursements (§36-30, HRS) each year. The estimated total for FY 2012 will amount to in excess of \$600,000. The total amount of assessments from the inception of the fund amounts to \$2.7M.
4. The Wireless E911 fund has been raided in the past for \$16,000,000.
5. The current needs of the PSAPs for equipment necessary to operate their enhanced 911 wireless operations will exceed available funding by \$8M+ for FYs 2012-2015.

In closing, the Wireless Enhanced 911 funds should only be used for its intended purpose which is to save lives of emergency 911 callers.

Courtney Tagupa

TO: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair

Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

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

Date: March 17, 2011

Re: SB893, SD3

As a blind individual I do strongly support S.B. 893, SD3. 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 Newslines service can be funded. This will enable the Blind, Deaf Blind and people who are print disabled to access the things that are not easily available to them. Newslines 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 down lode 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.