



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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

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TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

House Bill 2727 – Relating to Education

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 2727 Relating to Movie Theaters. In 2015, Act 39 was passed and became effective on January 1, 2016. HRS §489-9 provides for open captioning at movie theaters during at least two showings per week of each motion picture that is produced and offered with open captioning and also requires movie theaters to provide audio description, upon request of any motion picture produced and offered with audio description.

Feedback from people who are deaf and hard of hearing has been very positive about being able to attend open captioned movies. We have also received comments from people who are older indicating that the captions are helpful and appreciated. One commercial theater chain began offering open captioned movies prior to January 1, 2016 and has been very responsive to audiences who are Deaf and hard of hearing by including the notation "OPEN CAP" on movie advertisements in the newspaper.

The Hawaii Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) who has enforcement authority over prohibition of discrimination under Hawaii's public accommodation law has submitted testimony with a suggested amendment. The main purpose of this bill is to repeal the sunset date of Act 39, and we concur with their amendment regarding only removing the sunset date. This bill was initially passed to improve accessibility of moviegoers who are Deaf and hard of hearing, but its implications have a far-reaching effect by providing effective or enhanced communication for the entire community.

With this amendment, we humbly request you pass this bill out of committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director