

Testimony of Russell Castagnaro
President and General Manager
Hawaii Information Consortium, LLC
hic.ehawaii.gov

Before the Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Senate
April 05, 2016 1:00 PM
Conference Room 211

Hearing on SR54 and SCR83 – Requesting a
Comprehensive Progress Report Regarding the Activities
and Expenses of the State’s Internet Portal

Aloha Chair Takuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and other members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the activities of the state’s Internet portal, and to talk about the many ways that Hawaii’s digital government services add value to the state, citizens and businesses they serve.

My name is Russell Castagnaro, and I am the President and General Manager of Hawaii Information Consortium, LLC. Hawaii Information Consortium, which is known as HIC and is staffed by 33 Hawaii residents, has managed eHawaii.gov and built online services for the state for 15 years.

I appreciate the attention that the Legislature has given to the portal over the years. Last year’s recognition of the portal by the State House (<http://m.hi.gov/house>) and 19 reference letters from our state and county partners (<http://m.hi.gov/1lf>) coupled with the Portal’s high rate of success were some of the reasons for the unanimous support shown by the Access Hawaii Committee for the portal contract renewal last year.

Scott Somerhalder, Vice President of Portal Operations for our parent company, NIC, INC, submitted testimony before the Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Technology on HIC’s behalf two weeks ago. I would like to add to his testimony to point out that in the resolution there is no mention of the free services that HIC provides. Nor is there any information about the value of the savings (avoided costs of paper, employee time, and travel) that portal services provide to our partners.

The purpose of the Internet Portal Program is to fast-track eGovernment initiatives in Hawaii and provide a stable funding mechanism for the operation of those services. Each year the portal provides a report to the Access Hawaii Committee, which is then submitted to the legislature. Most of the requested information is available in those reports (<http://ahc.ehawaii.gov/reports/annual-reports/>)

HIC also submits our audited financials to the Access Hawaii Committee each year. This is a level of transparency that few, if any, other vendors provide to the state.

As a part of the program, in surveys regarding online government services from the Center for Digital Government, the state of Hawaii has moved from 49th in 1997 to 1st in the nation in 2014 and has won over 50 awards (7 in 2015).

Mme. Chair and members of the Committee, Hawaii is a leading digital government program by every possible measure. Hawaii's departments and agencies are asking for more, and we are committed to doing everything in our power to be the best possible digital government partner to the state and counties.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this important topic, and members of the HIC staff and I are happy to answer any questions you may have.