
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE LEGISLATURE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the public plays an
2 important role in the legislative process through the testimony
3 they provide. However, the opportunity to provide testimony in
4 person at committee hearings may not be available to all members
5 of the public, especially those who live outside of the urban
6 core of the island of Oahu and on neighbor islands or those who
7 experience barriers to access due to disabilities. Individuals
8 with disabilities often must utilize technology and technology-
9 based services and equipment to travel or to effectively
10 communicate with others, but these services and equipment may
11 not be readily available to them to participate in the
12 legislative process.

13 The legislature further finds that as technology evolves,
14 other state governments have implemented remote committee
15 hearings to bridge the distance between testifiers and
16 legislative committees. In 1978, Alaska established a
17 teleconference network and began holding remote hearings for



1 residents. In 2014, more than four thousand citizens of Alaska
2 participated remotely in five thousand hours of legislative
3 teleconferences. In Nevada, only about two per cent of the
4 state's population lives in the capital city of Carson City,
5 while seventy-six per cent live in the Las Vegas metro area,
6 about four hundred miles away. The Nevada Legislature began
7 videoconference hearings between the two cities in 1991. In
8 2015, seven hundred thirty-seven committee meetings were
9 conducted by videoconference, with a total of 6,699 citizens
10 attending.

11 The legislature notes that a videoconferencing pilot
12 project began in 2014 for use in certain state senate committee
13 hearings. The pilot project allows individuals to offer
14 testimony and participate in hearings by teleconference through
15 a computer with a webcam, microphone, and a reliable internet
16 connection. The implementation of a program similar to the
17 videoconferencing pilot project by both houses of the state
18 legislature will help to improve the legislative process and
19 provide the public with another means to provide testimony.

20 The purpose of this Act is to increase the available
21 methods of public participation in the legislative process by



1 establishing a remote legislative access program to enable
2 Hawaii residents to participate remotely in legislative
3 proceedings and appropriating funds to establish the program.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 21G, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
6 and to read as follows:

7 "§21G- Remote legislative access program. (a) There
8 is established in the state capitol a remote legislative access
9 program that shall become part of the legislature's public
10 access program.

11 (b) The remote legislative access program shall be
12 supervised by the joint legislative access committee established
13 pursuant to section 21D-6; provided that the committee shall
14 seek advice and recommendations from experts with knowledge in
15 remote communications, including the chief information officer
16 of the office of enterprise technology services, in implementing
17 the program.

18 (c) In establishing the remote legislative access program,
19 the joint legislative access committee shall consider different
20 methods of communication, including teleconferencing and
21 videoconferencing, and different technologies that are capable



1 of accommodating individuals with visual or hearing impairments
2 to administer the program."

3 SECTION 3. Section 21D-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 "~~+~~§21D-6 **Joint legislative access committee.**~~+~~ There
6 is established the joint legislative access committee, which
7 shall be composed of members of the legislature. The president
8 of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives
9 shall each appoint a co-chair and two members or more to the
10 committee, one of whom shall be a member of the minority party.

11 The committee shall:

12 (1) Oversee the staff and operations of the legislative
13 broadcast project, and recommend policies for the
14 project, which shall be adopted by concurrent
15 resolution; ~~and~~

16 (2) Oversee the staff and operations of the remote
17 legislative access program, and recommend policies for
18 the program, which shall be adopted by concurrent
19 resolution; and

20 ~~+~~ (3) Review the operations of the public access room,
21 legislative internet project, remote legislative



1 access program, and other public access projects of
2 the legislature and recommend policies for these
3 projects to the president of the senate and the
4 speaker of the house of representatives."

5 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
7 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 for the
8 establishment of the remote legislative access program.

9 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the legislature
10 for the purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
12 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

13 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Remote Legislative Access Program; Establishment; Joint
Legislative Access Committee; Public Access; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a Remote Legislative Access Program to allow for the
submission of testimony remotely. Appropriates funds.
Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

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not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

