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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LEGISLATIVE ACCESS THROUGH REMOTE TESTIMONY.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's geography  
2 as an archipelago of islands poses particular challenges for  
3 residents of the counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui active  
4 participation in the legislative process. While legislative  
5 committees accept written testimony via electronic means, in-  
6 person, face-to-face testimony can have a significant impact on  
7 legislators and the media. For members of the public who live  
8 far from the state capitol, it is costly and time-consuming to  
9 provide in-person testimony before the legislature. The  
10 legislature also finds that the lack of remote access to the  
11 legislative process also disenfranchises persons with  
12 disabilities who live on all islands. Enabling the public to  
13 provide live, real time remote testimony will improve  
14 opportunities for the public to participate in the legislative  
15 process.

16           The legislature further finds that for neighbor island  
17 residents, physically attending legislative committee hearings



1 to testify on measures can cost upwards of \$300 per day for  
2 travel and other costs and requires taking time off from work.  
3 This barrier affects approximately four hundred thousand people  
4 living in the counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui who deserve  
5 greater opportunity to be heard, to testify, and to participate  
6 in committee hearings of the legislature.

7 The legislature recognizes that Alaska, Nebraska, Nevada,  
8 and Washington have successful remote testimony programs.  
9 Hawaii can join these states by creating a way for the public to  
10 submit remote testimony on legislation.

11 The purpose of this Act is to require each house of the  
12 legislature to establish procedures and necessary information  
13 infrastructure for the public to present remote testimony at  
14 legislative committee hearings.

15 SECTION 2. Chapter 21, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended  
16 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to  
17 read as follows:

18 "§21- Remote testimony; rules. (a) Each house of the  
19 legislature shall establish, by rule:

20 (1) Procedures that enable the legislature to use remote  
21 testimony at legislative committee hearings;



1       (2) Procedures that enable the public to present oral  
2       testimony at legislative committee hearings through  
3       remote testimony; and

4       (3) Procedures to accommodate persons with disabilities  
5       through remote testimony.

6       (b) As used in this section, "remote testimony" means the  
7       use of video conferencing or other technology that facilitates  
8       interaction between the public and members of the legislature  
9       and enables the public to submit oral testimony remotely via the  
10       Internet or other telecommunications technology during  
11       legislative hearings and proceedings."

12       SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
13 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$17,000 or so much  
14 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the  
15 sum of \$3,400 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
16 year 2020-2021 for the purposes of this Act.

17       The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
18 of accounting and general services for the purposes of this Act.

19       SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.

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# H.B. NO. 635

**Report Title:**

Remote Testimony; Legislature; Public Participation; Persons With Disabilities

**Description:**

Requires each house of the Legislature to establish, by rule, procedures that enable the legislature to use remote testimony at legislative committee hearings to enable the public to present oral testimony at committee hearings and accommodate persons with disabilities. Appropriates funds.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

