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

February 3, 2020

TO: The Honorable Senator Russel E. Ruderman, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2248 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

Hearing: February 5, 2020, 2:45 P.M.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent and offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill requires DHS to establish a neighbor islands blind and visually impaired service pilot program to provide services and training for blind and visually impaired neighbor island residents. Appropriates funds. Repeals 06/30/2021.

DHS appreciates the intent of the measure as it may serve to supplement services for neighbor island residents, particularly in the area of transportation; however, the department respectfully notes that services described in the measure are currently available to eligible participants of our Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Services for the Blind Branch, Ho`opono.

Ho`opono provides adjustment to blindness services, including Structured Discovery™ training, peer-to-peer mentoring, counseling, employment opportunities, low vision services and more to eligible individuals in their homes and communities via the

Vocational Rehabilitation program, the New Visions program, and the Independent Living for Older Individuals who are Blind Program statewide.

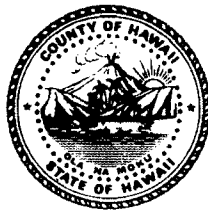
Ho`opono's New Visions program is the only training center to hold Structured Discovery™ certification in the State of Hawaii. This certification was received from the National Blindness Professional Certification Board in 2008.

The proposed legislation requires that: "The department of human services shall identify and secure other sources of funding, including federal funding, to provide for matching funds for the pilot program...". If the measure passes, the department will attempt to secure such funding; however, this will likely be difficult due to existing federal funding already allocated for these service as noted above to serve DVR's clients statewide.

DHS also requests that any appropriation not supplant the budget priorities identified in the Executive Budget. Also, if the bill moves forward, DHS suggests extending the duration of the pilot as 1 year from the effective date is not enough time to implement and evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

Harry Kim
Mayor



Roy Takemoto
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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January 31, 2020

Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Legislature

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

Dear Chairs Ruderman and Baker, Vice-Chairs Rhoads and Chang, and Committee members:

RE: SB 2248 Relating to Human Services

Although Hawaii County has long had a Mayor's Committee on People With Disabilities, I confess that I was unaware of the extent to which services are available on Oahu to persons who are blind or have a significant visual impairment, but unavailable on the Neighbor Islands.

I thank the Deaf and Blind Task Force for identifying this gap and bringing it to the attention of our lawmakers. I am pleased to be able to support SB 2248, and pledge our County support for any pilot program that may be initiated if this bill passes.

I hope you will act favorably on SB 2248.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Kim
MAYOR

SB-2248

Submitted on: 1/31/2020 5:33:30 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	No

Comments: