
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM TO RECRUIT AND EMPLOY QUALIFIED BLIND PROFESSIONALS TO SERVE AS ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY INSTRUCTORS AND IN OTHER POSITIONS AS TEACHERS OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS.

1 WHEREAS, the National Orientation and Mobility
2 Certification (NOMC) is a credentialing process administered by
3 the National Blindness Professional Certification Board and
4 includes training in teaching Structured Discovery Cane Travel;
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7 WHEREAS, for decades, Structured Discovery Cane Travel has
8 empowered blind children and adults across the United States,
9 helping them build confidence and feelings of self-respect as
10 they move safely from place to place; and
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12 WHEREAS, the methods and principles of Structured Discovery
13 Cane Travel come from the lived experiences of blind men and
14 women who have shared their experiences, attitudes, and
15 techniques with each other since 1940, leading to techniques,
16 problem solving strategies, experiential learning, confidence
17 building exercises, and the role modeling of non-visual
18 techniques, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the
19 structured discovery approach and helps correct misconceptions
20 about blindness; and
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22 WHEREAS, historically, the Department of Education has not
23 employed NOMC credentialed professionals to teach matters of
24 orientation and mobility to blind students, and until recently,
25 only accepted the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist
26 (COMS) credentialing from the Academy for Certification of
27 Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals; and
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1 WHEREAS, the COMS certification focuses on vision-centered
2 orientation and mobility services, but does not focus on the
3 structured discovery approach; and
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5 WHEREAS, the structured discovery approach emphasizes the
6 employment of blind instructors, whereas the vision-centered
7 orientation and mobility approach emphasizes the employment of
8 non-blind instructors, resulting in diminished employment
9 opportunities for qualified blind persons as instructors in
10 Department of Education programs; and
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12 WHEREAS, while the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board now
13 accepts the NOMC credentialed professionals to serve in certain
14 positions for which they are qualified to teach visually
15 impaired students, this change has not significantly increased
16 employment of blind instructors in the Department of Education;
17 now, therefore,
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19 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
20 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
21 of 2022, that the Department of Education is urged to develop
22 and implement an affirmative action program, to the extent
23 permitted by law, designed to recruit and employ qualified blind
24 professionals to serve as orientation and mobility instructors
25 and in other positions, as teachers of visually impaired
26 students; and
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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Education
29 is urged to prepare a report of its findings and recommendations
30 regarding the recruitment and employment of blind persons in
31 instructional positions with the Department of Education for
32 which they are qualified, with the goal of increasing such
33 employment, and include in this report actions taken, progress
34 made, and any proposed legislation, and submit the report to the
35 Legislature no later than thirty days prior to the convening of
36 the Regular Session of 2023; and
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38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
39 Resolution be transmitted to the Interim Superintendent of
40 Education, Chairperson of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board,
41 Administrator of the Department of Human Services' Division of
42 Vocational Rehabilitation Ho'opono Services for the Blind Branch,



1 President of the National Blindness Professional Certification
2 Board, President of the National Federation of the Blind of
3 Hawaii, and the President of the Hawaii Association of the
4 Blind.
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