
SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM TO RECRUIT AND EMPLOY QUALIFIED BLIND PERSONS 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 for teaching Structured Discovery Cane Travel
5 to blind individuals; and
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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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29 WHEREAS, the COMS certification focuses on vision-centered
30 orientation and mobility services, but does not focus on the
31 structured discovery approach; and
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1 WHEREAS, the structured discovery approach emphasizes the
2 employment of blind instructors, whereas the vision-centered
3 orientation and mobility approach emphasizes the employment of
4 non-blind instructors, resulting in diminished employment
5 opportunities for qualified blind persons as instructors in
6 Department of Education programs; and
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8 WHEREAS, while the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board now
9 accepts NOMC credentialed professionals to serve in certain
10 positions for which they are qualified to teach visually
11 impaired students, this change has not significantly increased
12 employment of blind instructors in the Department of Education;
13 now, therefore,
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15 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
16 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022,
17 that the Department of Education is urged to develop and
18 implement an affirmative action program, to the extent permitted
19 by law, designed to recruit and employ qualified blind
20 professionals to serve as orientation and mobility instructors
21 and in other positions, as teachers of visually impaired
22 students; and
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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of the
25 Department of Education is urged to prepare a report of findings
26 and recommendations regarding the recruitment and employment of
27 blind persons in instructional positions with the Department of
28 Education for which they are qualified, with the goal of
29 increasing such employment, and include in this report actions
30 taken, progress made, and any proposed legislation, and submit
31 the report to this body at least thirty days prior to the
32 convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and
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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
35 Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education,
36 Chairperson of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board, Administrator
37 of the Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational
38 Rehabilitation Services for the Blind Branch (Ho'opono Service
39 for the Blind), President of the National Blindness Professional
40 Certification Board, President of the National Federation of the
41 Blind of Hawaii, and President of the Hawaii Association of the
42 Blind.

