

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 19 , 2022

RE: S.C.R. No. 61
S.D. 1
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-First State Legislature
Regular Session of 2022
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, to which was referred S.C.R. No. 61, S.D. 1, entitled:

"SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO ASSESS THE SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL EFFECTS OF MANDATING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR HEARING AIDS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to request the Auditor to assess the social and financial effects of mandatory health insurance coverage for hearing aids.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i and three individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Hawaii Association of Health Plans and Hawaii Medical Service Association.

Your Committee finds that one-third of Americans between the ages of sixty-five years and seventy-five years and one-half of Americans older than seventy-five years of age have some degree of hearing loss. Your Committee further finds that, while most health insurance plans in the State cover the purchase of hearing aids, typically the coverage is low and leaves the patient with a large copayment. This measure therefore requests the Auditor to



conduct an impact assessment report on the social and financial effects of mandated health insurance coverage for hearing aids, as proposed by Senate Bill No. 2439, S.D. 2, Regular Session of 2022.

Your Committee has amended this measure by expanding the contents of the Auditor's assessment to include:

- (1) The number of residents in the State in the target population who suffer hearing loss based on national prevalence rates;
- (2) A determination of the current standard for frequency of replacement and the cost limitations, if any, placed on the hearing aid coverage benefit, by researching public and private entities that provide coverage for hearing aids and individuals who need, use, or otherwise experience the need for hearing aids;
- (3) Whether different standards for frequency of replacement are applied to adults in comparison to minors in need of hearing aids;
- (4) An examination of the existing medically necessary standards of care used to determine what type of hearing aid best suits an individual with hearing loss; and
- (5) An examination of the existing technology in hearing aids and possible future technology.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.C.R. No. 61, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance in the form attached hereto as S.C.R. No. 61, S.D. 1, H.D. 1.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Consumer
Protection & Commerce,



AARON LING JOHANSON, Chair



