

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3514

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 29 2022

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

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-First State Legislature
Regular Session of 2022
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection, to which was referred S.C.R. No. 61 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 and intent of this measure is to request the Auditor to conduct an assessment, pursuant to sections 23-51 and 23-52, Hawaii Revised Statutes, of the social and financial effects of mandating health insurance coverage for hearing aids, as proposed in S.B. No. 2439, S.D. 1 (2022).

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Disability and Communication Access Board, Kaiser Permanente Hawaii, and two individuals.

Your Committee finds that the inability of many residents to pay for medically necessary hearing aids can negatively impact the education, health, and quality of life for children and adults who experience hearing loss. While some health insurance plans provide partial coverage for hearing aids, the amount of coverage may be low and inconsistent, leaving patients with large copayment obligations. Your Committee notes that the Auditor, pursuant to Report No. 14-10, analyzed S.B. No. 309, S.D. 1 (2014), which would have mandated health insurance coverage for hearing aids,



and determined that S.B. No. 309, S.D. 1 (2014), not be enacted as written, noting that it lacked certain coverage parameters, such as the frequency for replacement or costs covered by insurers for hearing aids. Your Committee notes that S.B. No. 2439, S.D. 2 (2022), identifies specific coverage parameters and would require health insurers, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for hearing aids, subject to a minimum benefit of \$1,500 per hearing-impaired ear every thirty-six months. Accordingly, amendments to this measure are necessary to request the Auditor to analyze the specific coverage parameters identified in S.B. No. 2439, S.D. 2 (2022), and provide any update to Report No. 14-10, to assess both the social and financial effects of requiring coverage.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requesting the Auditor, pursuant to sections 23-51 and 23-52, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to analyze S.B. No. 2439, S.D. 2 (2022), which proposes a minimum benefit of \$1,500 per hearing impaired ear every thirty-six months;
- (2) Acknowledging the procedural history of the Auditor's Report No. 14-10 and requesting the Auditor to prepare an update to the Legislature in its report assessing S.B. No. 2439, S.D. 2 (2022); and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

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



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




ROSALYN H. BAKER, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-First Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
CPN

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:
SCR 61	CPN, WAM	03-23-2022
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____		
The Recommendation is:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313		
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)
Nay	Excused	
BAKER, Rosalyn H. (C)	✓	
CHANG, Stanley (VC)	✓	
DECOITE, Lynn	✓	
NISHIHARA, Clarence K.	✓	
RIVIERE, Gil	✓	
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A.	✓	
FEVELLA, Kurt	✓	
TOTAL	7	
Recommendation:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted		
Chair's or Designee's Signature:		
		
Distribution:		
Original File with Committee Report	Yellow Clerk's Office	Pink Drafting Agency
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*Only one measure per Record of Votes