



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LT. GOVERNOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

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CATHERINE P. AWAKUNI COLÓN
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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, February 26, 2021
9:30 a.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 947, S.D. 1, RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ji Sook “Lisa” Kim, and I am the Cable Administrator of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs’ (Department) Cable Television Division. The Department offers comments on this bill.

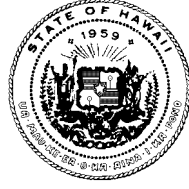
The purpose of this bill is to establish the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

The global pandemic, triggering stay-at-home and social distancing orders, has underscored the critical need for universal broadband access for distance learning, telework and job training, telehealth and social services, and social and civic engagement. In response, the federal government is making more funding available for broadband infrastructure, equipment, and internet services, and the Administration is focused on creating a healthy statewide broadband network and digital equity.

Like the Administration's proposed H.B. 913 and S.B. 1067, this measure recognizes the strong correlation between broadband access and economic development, and allows DBEDT to extend its efforts directing the State's digital equity strategy and fostering the synergy between public and private stakeholders to implement that strategy. The Department thus supports this measure, which creates a dedicated broadband office within DBEDT responsible for the State's broadband strategy; coordination of public and private broadband stakeholder efforts to extend broadband infrastructure and services; technology-driven diversification of our economy; and digital equity for all residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 24, 2021

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 947 SD1 – RELATING TO BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.**

Hearing: Friday, February 26, 2021, 9:30 a.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure. The Committee on Government Operations amended the measure by:

- (1) Establishing the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism instead of the Office of the Governor;
- (2) Removing the general fund appropriation for the creation and staffing of the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill establishes the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. (SD1)

Over the past ten months, DHS has collaborated with the Broadband Hui, a group of public and private sector entities, to increase Hawaii's digital capacity that will support the continuity of social connections, education, employment, and access to other essential services throughout the pandemic and beyond. Through the work of the Broadband Hui, we have supported broadband infrastructure development in rural communities, provided digital devices for students and families, supported the accessibility of telehealth, provided

information on low-cost internet options, and adopted a Digital Equity Declaration¹ to set a vision and goals for a more equitable digital future.

Looking to that future, much work remains ahead. It will take an ongoing commitment and collaboration from public and private partners to deliver on the goals set forth to address Hawaii's digital inequities and to leverage the opportunities enabled by improved digital access. The creation of a dedicated state office to promote and facilitate these collective efforts will help ensure implementation of the vision and goals articulated in the Digital Equity Declaration are realized.

We recognize this measure may require a financial investment at a time the State is facing a budget deficit. There are federal and other resources available, and a dedicated office is a worthwhile investment to prioritize and address digital inequity through broadband access, digital literacy, and digitally-enabled societal systems and is a great opportunity to drive economic and social recovery, diversification, and resilience.

The purpose of this bill aligns with `Ohana Nui, the Department's integrated and multi-generational service delivery approach to reduce the incidence of intergenerational poverty, dependence on public benefits, and improve each individual's and family's social and economic well-being and potential.

DHS defers to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, regarding administrative issues and the necessary appropriation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

¹ See, <https://www.broadbandhui.org/>



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

MIKE MCCARTNEY
DIRECTOR

CHUNG I. CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of
MIKE MCCARTNEY
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Friday, February 26, 2021

9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of

SB947 SD1

RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports SB947 SD1** that establishes the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office within the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

The COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the need for broadband infrastructure and digital equity across all of Hawaii's residents especially those in rural unserved and underserved communities

It is important that we build the foundation for Hawaii to thrive in the digital economy and to eliminate digital inequity. The establishment of the Broadband & Digital Equity Office will provide the focus, coordination and facilitation of programs that enable all Hawaii residents to seamlessly connect to the digital resources needed to be successful in our modern society.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



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**The State Legislature
Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, February 26, 2021
9:30 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

RE: S.B. 947 SD 1 Relating to a Broadband and Digital Equity Office

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a membership organization of people age fifty and over, with nearly 145,000 members in Hawai'i.

AARP Hawai'i supports S.B. 947 SD1 which establishes the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office within the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. The bill appropriates funds for the establishment and staffing for the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office.

The establishment of a dedicated state office to promote and facilitate efforts to increase Hawai'i's digital capacity is long overdue. The pandemic has amplified the urgency and importance to address the broadband inequities so that all Hawaii residents can benefit from accessing digital technology. The state will be able to prioritize broadband infrastructure development in rural communities, improve the accessibility of telehealth, and offer low-cost options for all residents. From students' distance learning in schools to the kupuna safely interfacing with their physician through telehealth consultation, the opportunities and benefits of a new digital world are endless. Having a broadband and digital equity office will help lead the State by working and collaborating with community partners in advancing technology in Hawaii.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to support S.B. 947 SD1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keali'i Lopez".

Keali'i Lopez, AARP Hawai'i
State Director



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, February 26, 2021; 9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 0947, SENATE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 0947, Senate Draft 1, RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would establish the Hawaii Broadband Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to aggressively increase broadband affordability, penetration, and competitive availability in the State.

The bill would take effect upon approval.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

Hawaii has long been at the forefront of integrating newer technologies into daily life. One example of this is Hawaii's Telehealth Law which has served as a model across the United States. Yet, it was only after COVID struck our islands that this law became fully integrated into daily life.

Today, it is common practice to ZOOM or SKYPE with your health practitioner instead of physically going to the provider's office for a visit. When COVID first hit our islands, many health providers had to limit the number of patients that could be serviced in-person because of a scarcity of Personal Protective Equipment, restrictions in the gatherings of groups, and the need for changes to the physical arrangement of examination rooms and other diagnostic facilities.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 0947, Senate Draft 1
Friday, February 26, 2021; 9:30 a.m.
Page 2

For people with adequate broadband access, telehealth was a lifeline for the provision of essential primary health care services. Yet, health care facilities in rural areas experienced the same problems when COVID hit. They too had to limit the number of patients they could see. But because these communities lacked adequate broadband access, they were effectively cut off from primary care. Many were forced to bear their maladies until it became necessary to go to the emergency room.

The Governor's suspension of a statute that prohibits the use of standard telephonic service in telehealth has temporarily eased this inequity. For those without adequate broadband, at least for now, they are able to obtain basic primary care services over landline telephones. But that is neither adequate, tenable, nor fair to the thousands of citizens who lack broadband access.

Because of this, the HPCA views the lack of broadband access in rural areas as an issue of social equity. In this day and age, everyone should have equal access to health care. Telehealth was envisioned as the means of leveling the field between urban and rural areas. The lack of broadband ensures that urban and rural communities remain unequal.

As a member of the Broadband Hui, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Date: February 26, 2021
 Time: 9:30 a.m.
 Where: Via Videoconference
 Conference Room 211

RE: SB 947 SD1, Relating to a Broadband and Digital Equity Office

Aloha mai e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee.

The listed organizations and individuals **SUPPORT SB 947 SD1**, which establishes a Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

Over the past ten months, our organizations have collaborated, each within their own ability, to increase Hawai'i's digital capacity, thereby supporting the continuity of social connections, education, employment, and access to other essential services throughout the pandemic. Through the work of the Broadband Hui, we have supported broadband infrastructure development in rural communities, provided digital devices for students and families, supported the accessibility of telehealth, provided information on low-cost internet options, and adopted a Digital Equity Declaration to set a vision and goals for a more equitable digital future.

Looking to that future, much work remains ahead. It will take an ongoing commitment and collaboration from public and private partners to deliver on the goals set forth to address Hawai'i's digital inequities and to leverage the opportunities enabled by improved digital access. The creation of a dedicated state office to promote and facilitate these collective efforts will help ensure the progress of the Broadband Hui continues and that the vision and goals articulated in the Digital Equity Declaration are realized.

We recognize this measure may require a financial investment at a time the State is facing a budget deficit. We believe, however, that addressing digital inequity through broadband access, digital literacy, and digitally-enabled societal systems is one of our greatest opportunities for economic and social recovery, diversification, and resilience.

For these reasons, we kindly request you **PASS SB 947 SD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

(Please see names on the following page.)

	Name	Organization	Email Address	Zip
1	Allicyn Tasaka	Hawaii Workforce Development Council	Allicyn.h.tasaka@hawaii.gov	96813
2	Ashley Kierkiewicz, Council Member - Hawai'i County		ashley.kierkiewicz@hawaiicounty.gov	96749
3	Crystal Yamasaki	Crystal Clear Communications	crystalclearcomms@gmail.com	96817
4	Daniel C. Smith	[self]	smithdan@hawaii.edu	96782
5	David Miyashiro	HawaiiKidsCAN	david.miyashiro@hawaiikidsan.org	96734
6	Dennis Y. Teranishi	PICHTR	dennis.teranishi@pichtr.org	96816
7	Jacqui Hoover	Hawaii Leeward Planning Conference	jacqui_hlpc@yahoo.com	96743
8	Jacqui L Hoover	Hawaii Island Economic Development Board	jhoover@hiedb.org	96743
9	Janice Ikeda	Vibrant Hawaii	janice@vibranthawaii.org	96720
10	Jared Grugett	HDT	jgrugett@hawaiidt.com	96819
11	Jeanne Skog		jskog@skograsmussen.com	96793
12	Jeanne Skog	Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii	jskog@skograsmussen.com	96793
13	Jenifer Sunrise Winter		jwinter@hawaii.edu	96821
14	Jonathan Chun	Kauai Economic Development Board, Inc.	jjc@kauai-law.com	96766
15	Kamehameha Schools	Kamehameha Schools	bocampbe@ksbe.edu	96813
16	Katie Hendrickson	Code.org	katie@code.org	45701
17	Linda Puppolo	Maui County Workforce Development Board/Office of Economic Development	lpmindeze@gmail.com	96784
18	Lynn Otaguro	O'ahu County Democrats Digital Equity Committee	lmotaguro@yahoo.com	96821
19	Mark Iha	Tangent Systems	mark@tangent.systems	96814
20	Noel Morin	Think BIG	Noelgmorin@gmail.com	96720
21	Philip Bossert	Hawaii Association of Independent Schools	pbossert@hais.us	96826
22	Pono Shim	Oahu Economic Development Board	pshim@oedb.biz	96813
23	Rachel H Solemsaas	Hawai'i Community College	rachel.solemsaas@gmail.com	96720
24	Stacey Aldrich		stacey.aldrich@librarieshawaii.org	96813
25	Susan Tai		susantaikaneko@gmail.com	96814
26	Tharon LeBlanc	Michaels Management	tleblanc@tmo.com	96819

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HAWAI'I GOVERNMENT
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February 26, 2021

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Via Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE

RE: Testimony supporting SB 947 SD1, Relating to a Broadband and Digital Equity Office

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

My name is Christine Sakuda and I serve as the executive director of Transform Hawai'i Government (THG), a coalition of organizations and individuals who advocate for an accessible, accountable and responsive state government that leverages technology to help citizens, communities, and businesses throughout Hawai'i to thrive. We provide a consistent and persistent voice to keep modernization a top priority of state government.

THG supports SB 797 SD1, Relating to a Broadband and Digital Equity Office, which establishes the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony supporting this important bill.

Respectfully submitted,



Christine Sakuda
Executive Director
Transform Hawai'i Government
email: csakuda@TransformHawaiiGov.org | phone: (808) 321-2811
web: www.TransformHawaiiGov.org



LATE

THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING

DATE: Friday, February 26, 2021

TIME: 9:30AM

POSITION: SUPPORT SB 947 SD1

Passage of SB 947 SD1 will establish a Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

We support Hawai'i's digital capacity, thereby supporting the continuity of social connections, education, employment, and access to other essential services throughout the pandemic.

We support broadband infrastructure development in rural communities, provided digital devices for students and families, supported the accessibility of telehealth, provided information on low-cost internet options, and adopted a Digital Equity Declaration to set a vision and goals for a more equitable digital future.

It will take an ongoing commitment and collaboration of many stakeholders to address Hawai'i's digital inequities and to leverage the opportunities enabled by improved digital access.

The creation of a dedicated state office to promote and facilitate collective efforts will help ensure the progress of the Broadband Hui continues and that the vision and goals articulated in the Digital Equity Declaration are realized. We recognize this measure may require a financial investment at the time the State is facing a budget deficit.

We believe, however, that addressing digital inequity through broadband access, digital literacy, and digitally enabled societal systems is one of our greatest opportunities for economic and social recovery, diversification, and resilience. For these reasons, we kindly request that this Committee pass SB 947 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Juanita Mahienaena Brown Kawamoto

Lunahoomalu

Hawaiian Affairs Caucus

Democratic Party of Hawaii

SB-947-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2021 9:12:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wayne Bunte	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

It is vitally important to address digital equity issues as it relates to broadband deployment in Hawaii. I fully support the effort to improve access to effective broadband for Hawaii residents. This is particularly important within certain areas on the neighbor islands.

LATE

SB-947-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2021 9:31:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John L. Reppun	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha & Good Morning

Please accept my support for this measure as amended, placing the proposed Digital Equity Office within DBEDT. Connectivity for all is essential for conducting business that will effectively connect rural and urban areas (farm to table) - so critical as we've seen during Covid times - but highlighting how we can build positive business relationships into the future. Digital equity must also be integrated into all aspects of education, from an early age, essential to all aspects of successful economic development for the future.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide input.
John L Reppun, lifetime resident of Windward O'ahu