



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of
MIKE MCCARTNEY
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 329

In consideration of

SB947 SD2

RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports SB947 SD2** 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.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/24/2021

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 329 Via Videoconference

Committee: House Consumer Protection
& Commerce

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 0947, SD2 RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL
EQUITY OFFICE.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office within
the department of business, economic development, and tourism.
(SD2)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education supports SB 947, SD2, which establishes a broadband and digital equity office for the state.

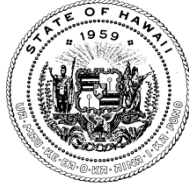
Equitable access to broadband and technology resources has been a long-standing issue. Often in education, this broadband access challenge has been referred to as the "homework gap" because students with broadband have access to more resources to assist with homework. The need for equitable, quality broadband for the people of Hawaii has become even more critical with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which required the state to quickly pivot to remote work and learning. There are still challenges in providing necessary services and support in areas of the state that have little or no connectivity due to remoteness or the lack of internet service and broadband infrastructure. A state office for broadband and digital equity is an important step in providing equitable access to everyone.

The Department appreciates the importance of equitable access and looks forward to working with the office to provide an educational perspective, especially in the area of K-12 education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



TESTIMONY BY:

JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors
LYNN A.S. ARAKI-REGAN
DEREK J. CHOW
ROSS M. HIGASHI
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

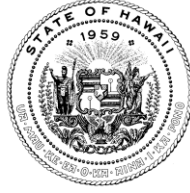
March 24, 2021
2:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Teleconference

S.B. 947, S.D. 2
RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** S.B. 947, S.D. 2, which will establish the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. This bill will help with the development and implementation of specific strategies and plans to aggressively increase broadband affordability and penetration in the State. Furthermore, the creation of the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office could assist in continuing the work implemented during this administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



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
DIRECTOR

JO ANN M. UCHIDA TAKEUCHI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Wednesday, March 24, 2021
2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 947, S.D. 2, RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Johanson 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.

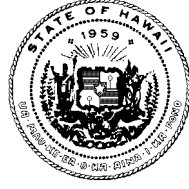
The purpose of this bill is to establish the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

The global pandemic 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. This bill will allow DBEDT to extend its efforts to direct the State’s strategy to foster broadband deployment and digital equity, and to coordinate and support public and private stakeholder efforts towards those ends. The

Department thus supports the creation of a much-needed broadband office dedicated to that purpose.

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

March 23, 2021

TO: The Honorable Representative Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 947 SD2 – RELATING TO BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.**

Hearing: March 24, 2021, 2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure.

The Senate 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.

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means amended the measure by making technical amendments.

The House Committee on Economic Development passed the measure unamended.

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/>



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facebook.com/AARPHawaii

The State Legislature
Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Wednesday, March 24, 2021
2:00 p.m.

TO: The Honorable Aaron Johanson, Chair

RE: S.B. 947 SD 2 Relating to a Broadband and Digital Equity Office

Aloha Chair Johanson 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 SD2 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 SD2.

Sincerely,

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

Keali'i Lopez, AARP Hawai'i
State Director



**Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Wednesday, March 24, 2021; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 0947, SENATE DRAFT 2, RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, 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 2, 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 2
Wednesday, March 24, 2021; 2:00 p.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.



House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Date: March 24, 2021
 Time: 2:00 p.m.
 Where: Via Videoconference
 Conference Room 329

RE: **SB 947 SD2, Relating to a Broadband and Digital Equity Office**

Aloha mai e Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Committee.

The listed organizations and individuals continue to **SUPPORT SB 947 SD2**, which establishes a Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

Over the past year 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 SD2**. 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	Hawai'i County Council	ashley.kierkiewicz@hawaiicounty.gov	96749
3	Christina Higa		christinahiga@gmail.com	96815
4	Christine Sakuda	Transform Hawaii Government	csakuda@transformhawaii.gov	96806
5	Crystal Yamasaki	Crystal Clear Communications	crystalclearcomms@gmail.com	96817
6	Daniel C. Smith	[self]	smithdan@hawaii.edu	96782
7	David Miyashiro	HawaiiKidsCAN	david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org	96734
8	Deborah Bond-Upson	LearningBond	deborah@learningbond.com	96734
9	Dennis Y. Teranishi	PICHTR	dennis.teranishi@pichtr.org	96816
10	Jacqui Hoover	Hawaii Leeward Planning Conference	jacqui_hlpc@yahoo.com	96743
11	Jacqui L Hoover	Hawaii Island Economic Development Board	jhoover@hiedb.org	96743
12	Janice Ikeda	Vibrant Hawaii	janice@vibranthawaii.org	96720
13	Jared Grugett	HDT	jgrugett@hawaiidt.com	96819
14	Jeanne Skog		jskog@skograsmussen.com	96793
15	Jeanne Skog	Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii	jskog@skograsmussen.com	96793
16	Jenifer Sunrise Winter		jswinter@hawaii.edu	96821
17	Jonathan Chun	Kauai Economic Development Board, Inc.	jjc@kauai-law.com	96766
18	Kamehameha Schools	Kamehameha Schools	bocampbe@ksbe.edu	96813
19	Katie Hendrickson	Code.org	katie@code.org	45701
20	Kelley Withy		kelleywithy@gmail.com	96734
21	Laura Arcibal		lkmarcibal@gmail.com	96813
22	Laura Kay Rand	Hawaii Foodbank	lkrand@hawaiiifoodbank.org	96819
23	Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, MD		lbuencon@gmail.com	96744
24	Linda Puppolo	Maui County Workforce Development Board/Office of Economic Development	lpmindeze@gmail.com	96784
25	Lynelle Marble	Hawaii Executive Collaborative	lynellem@hawaiiexecutivecollaborative.org	96813
26	Lynn Otaguro	O'ahu County Democrats Digital Equity Committee	lmotaguro@yahoo.com	96821
27	Mark Iha	Tangent Systems	mark@tangent.systems	96814
28	Noel Morin	Think BIG	Noelgmorin@gmail.com	96720
29	Philip Bossert	Hawaii Association of Independent Schools	pbossert@hais.us	96826
30	Pono Shim	Oahu Economic Development Board	pshim@oedb.biz	96813
31	Rachel H. Solemsaas	Hawai'i Community College	rachel.solemsaas@gmail.com	96720
32	Stacey Aldrich		stacey.aldrich@librarieshawaii.org	96813
33	Summer Keli'ipio	`A`ali`i Alliance	summer@aaliialliance.com	96744
34	Susan Tai		susantaikaneko@gmail.com	96814
35	Tharon LeBlanc	Michaels Management	tleblanc@tmo.com	96819



March 23, 2021

RE: SB947 SD2 RELATING TO BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

Dear Chair Johanson and the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce **supports** SB947 SD2 RELATING TO BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE that establishes the Hawai'i broadband and digital equity office within the department of business, economic development, and tourism.

Incorporated in 1968, the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization with nearly 500 member businesses, organizations and individuals that represent a variety of industries in the Kona and Kohala districts on Hawai'i Island. Known as West Hawai'i, this vast geographic area covers 1,309 square miles of the 4,028 square miles of the island. Many of our members serve the entire island with its population of over 200,000 as well as those that visit the island.

Connectivity is key to our local economy and way of life. Certainly, COVID-19 impacts have greatly elevated the digital access and equity issues whether it's working from home, online education or remote healthcare. Broadband is critical infrastructure for the 21st century and establishing a state office will provide the needed support to move forward. We believe this bill appropriately outlines the responsibilities of this office along with efforts in planning and coordination.

The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce exists to provide leadership and advocacy for a successful business environment in West Hawai'i. We work to strengthen our local economy and promote the well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy J. Laros". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wendy J. Laros, President and CEO
Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce

SB-947-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2021 12:22:13 AM

Testimony for CPC on 3/24/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lynn Otaguro	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

March 22, 2021

Testimony in support of SB 947 SD2, Relating to a Broadband and Digital Equity Office

Honorable Chair Johanson and members of the Committee:

In the past year, we have seen the importance of digital access and literacy, as COVID-19 shut down many in-person services and it became critical to be able to use the internet. We also have seen the gaps in access, raising concerns that some in our state are unable to receive essential services and fully participate in our communities.

During this time, I have been able to attend meetings of the Broadband Hui and hear of the inspiring work that its members are doing to bridge the digital divide. Among other things, members have shared about community projects to provide telehealth for needy and homeless individuals, collaboration between doctors and the library to allow for mental health services, the development of internet infrastructure for rural communities, and the provision of devices for school children. Through these meetings, new partnerships have been formed as connections are made and resources are shared, and the work benefits individuals, communities, and our state.

The work is wonderful, but it needs to be supported to continue and to grow. By creating and investing in a broadband and digital equity office, this bill will enable continuation of this work and will help our communities and our state to move closer to the vision set forth in the Hui's Digital Equity Declaration where Hawaii's people will have digital access and literacy and be able to use these to enrich their lives. This also is a timely and important investment in our economy. Please support this bill.

Sincerely,

Lynn Otaguro

Oahu, Hawaii

