

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 15 2023

RE: S.B. No. 614
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 614 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE NEIGHBOR ISLANDS BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Department of Human Services to:
 - (A) Establish a Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program that supplements existing statewide services by providing training and other services to neighbor island residents who are blind or visually impaired;
 - (B) Establish a Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program Working Group and submit a pilot program implementation plan to the Legislature before the Regular Session of 2024; and
 - (C) Submit a report on the Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program to the Legislature prior to the Regular Session of 2027; and



- (2) Appropriate \$25,000 to fund the establishment and operation of the Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program and Working Group.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Disability and Communication Access Board, Department of Human Services, Hawaii State Committee of Blind Vendors, National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, National Organization of Parents of Blind Children, and six individuals.

Your Committee finds that approximately two thousand neighbor island residents who are blind or visually impaired do not have access to or are ineligible for existing state and local support services, including training, adjustments to blindness services, and transportation. The Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program to be established pursuant to this measure will supplement existing statewide services and enable these individuals to receive the necessary training and other services that would enable them to have full and integrated lives in their communities.

Your Committee has heard the testimony of the Department of Human Services raising concerns regarding its lack of staffing and fiscal resources to implement the proposed pilot program, and that the number of necessary personnel would need to be researched through consultation with the working group. Your Committee also acknowledges the Department's concern that due to the federal funding requirements of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Services for Older Blind grants, funding for the new positions would need to be appropriated from the State's general funds in its entirety. Your Committee finds that these issues raise concerns that merit further consideration and requests further examination by your Committee on Ways and Means.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting language that allows, instead of requires, the Department of Human Services to enter into a contract with a nonprofit organization to oversee the pilot program and manage its volunteer personnel;
- (2) Inserting a blank appropriation amount;



- (3) Amending section 1 to clarify its purposes;
- (4) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 614, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 614, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Second Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Health and Human Services
HHS

Bill / Resolution No.:* SB 614	Committee Referral: HHS, WAM	Date: 2/8/23		
<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
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A. (C)	✓			
AQUINO, Henry J.C. (VC)	✓			
MORIWAKI, Sharon Y.	✓			
SHIMABUKURO, Maile S.L.				✓
AWA, Brenton	✓			
TOTAL	4			1
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes