

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

768

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 17** , 2023

RE: H.B. No. 1408  
H.D. 2

Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2023  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, to which was referred H.B. No. 1408, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State; and
- (2) Appropriate funds for the Digital Equity Grant Program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; University of Hawai'i System; Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities; Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission; AARP Hawai'i; Charter Communications; Kapolei Chamber of Commerce; Hawaiian Telcom; Hawaii Broadband Hui; and one individual. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Office of Information Practices.

Your Committee finds that the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic brought to light the need for digital equity throughout the State. Your Committee further finds that the federal

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government has identified having robust broadband infrastructure as a priority and has dedicated funding for digital equity programs across the country. This measure would establish a program to provide grants for the optimal use of expected federal funding, thereby allowing the State to improve adoption of broadband services by residents who are most in need of those services to access essential services and fully participate in society, democracy, and the economy.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting a definition for "broadband infrastructure";
- (2) Specifying that projects that include the deployment of broadband infrastructure are ineligible for a grant under the Digital Equity Grant Program; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

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 is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1408, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1408, H.D. 2.

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



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MARK M. NAKASHIMA, Chair



