



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

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Statement of  
**CHRIS J. SADAYASU**  
Director  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, February 7, 2023  
1:01 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**SB 1231**  
**RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY.**

Chair Decoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports SB 1231** that establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

Over the course of the last three years, the COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the need for digital equity for all of Hawai'i's residents. In the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (2022) the federal government recognized the importance of digital equity and created several programs including the Digital Equity Planning Grant and the Digital Equity Capacity Grant program. There is a one-year period for the development of the statewide digital equity plan at which point the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) will issue their notice of funding opportunity for the capacity grants.

The digital equity grant program created by SB 1231 will not only help to fund and build capacity in Hawai'i's communities, both urban and rural, sooner than the federal programs but it can also be applied specifically to the needs of the smaller frontline organizations, be more flexible and meet the local priorities in addressing issues of digital adoption, affordability, navigation, literacy, access to devices, emergency response, translation services, etc.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 1:01 p.m.

By

Garret T. Yoshimi, Vice President for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer  
University of Hawai'i System

#### SB 1231 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i, representing the State's broadband interests, supports SB 1231.

The proposed state digital equity grant program along with state funding support would provide needed funding opportunities to support digital equity efforts that would directly benefit communities with the greatest needs. Based on the proposed timing, this program would provide funding opportunities in advance of the anticipated National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program, and could be used to accelerate the delivery of digital equity and literacy benefits to our communities.

We would recommend that the efforts be fully coordinated with other statewide digital equity efforts, including the state's digital equity plan, the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Plan, and work funded under the Tribal Broadband Connectivity program with DHHL (all three efforts funded by NTIA).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 1231.



STATE OF HAWAII  
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION  
COMMISSION  
POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Co-Chairs:**  
Chair, DLNR  
Director, OPSD

**Commissioners:**  
Chair, Senate AEN  
Chair, Senate WTL  
Chair, House EEP  
Chair, House WAL  
Chairperson, HTA  
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Chairperson, DHHL  
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Director, DOH  
Chairperson, DOE  
Director, C+C DPP  
Director, Maui DP  
Director, Hawaii DP  
Director, Kauai DP  
The Adjutant General  
Manager, CZM

**Testimony of  
Leah Laramee  
Coordinator, Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

**Tuesday, February 7, 2023**

**1:01 PM**

**State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 229**

**In support of  
Senate Bill 1231  
RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

Senate Bill 1231 establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State and awards funds. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

Hawai'i's Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission recognizes that ground transportation contributes significantly to Hawai'i's share of greenhouse gas emissions. Both the digital divide and the climate crisis are global issues that have a disproportionate impact on low- and middle-income families. Sustainably closing the internet connectivity and usage gaps in low- and middle-income markets can also help in the fight against global warming.

Helping as many people as possible to connect to digital resources can also have transformative societal and environmental benefits, on both a local and global scale. According to a 2019 report by the Department of Agriculture, deploying universal broadband can create an extra \$47-\$65 billion each year for the U.S. economy. In the agriculture sector, farmers could significantly reduce their costs through the use of precision technology; for example, yield monitoring could save farmers \$25 per acre in input costs and weather modeling could prevent an average of \$264,000 per year in specialty crop loss per farmer. At the household level, deployment of universal broadband together with digital energy efficiency technologies is estimated to lower residential electricity bills by as much as one-fifth. The Digital Equity Grant Program is a good first step in achieving an equitable resilient future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

# OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

STATE OF HAWAII  
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT BUILDING  
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 107  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: 808-586-1400 FAX: 808-586-1412  
EMAIL: oip@hawaii.gov

To: Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

From: Cheryl Kakazu Park, Director

Date: February 7, 2023, 1:01 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Re: Testimony on S.B. No. 1231  
Relating to Digital Equity

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would establish a Digital Equity Grant Program. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) takes no position on the substance of this bill, but offers comments on and a proposed amendment to a confidentiality provision on bill page 8.

Proposed subsection \_\_-6(b) would require the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office to keep information in a grant application or challenge confidential, if requested, to the extent it falls under an exception to disclosure under chapter 92F, the Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA), **or** “comprises commercially sensitive information.” The UIPA’s exception for information whose disclosure would frustrate a legitimate government function already protects confidential commercial or financial information, as defined and discussed in many OIP opinions, and also protects trade secrets. It is not clear why the bill would also exempt “commercially sensitive information” and how that type of information differs from trade secret or as confidential commercial or financial information that is already protected from disclosure under the UIPA’s frustration exception. Nonetheless, the very existence of this second option for “commercially sensitive

information” implies that such information exists and applicants or challengers are permitted to designate it confidential in addition to the information falling under the UIPA’s frustration and other exceptions.

OIP is concerned that the additional option presents a loophole under which an applicant or challenger can broadly designate information as confidential, without being limited by what a grant applicant could normally expect an agency to withhold as confidential commercial or financial information under the UIPA. The provision does have one limitation on an applicant’s ability to designate the entire application as confidential: it requires the publicly available information to include sufficient evidence to demonstrate two of the twelve topics to be addressed, the proposed project area to be served and the nature of the digital inequity in that area. But it still allows an applicant to designate as confidential all information relating to the other ten topics, including such high-interest items as the applicant’s experience and ability to deliver on its promises, a description of the project itself, how many people in the project area would gain access to broadband, the project’s cost and timeline, its plan to cover non-English speaking populations, the amount and source of any matching funds, the project’s economic feasibility, and a list of required permits and approvals.

OIP believes the protection of confidential commercial and financial information and, if applicable, trade secrets under the UIPA’s frustration exception is sufficient on its own to protect applicants’ and challengers’ sensitive commercial and financial information. Thus, OIP recommends this Committee amend bill page 8, lines 5-6, by removing “or comprises commercially sensitive information” at the end of the sentence. The beginning of proposed subsection \_\_-6(b) would then read as follows, and retain subsections (1) and (2) below it:

“(b) To the extent the information in an application or challenge falls under one or more of the exceptions to public disclosure in section 92F-13, the office shall keep the information confidential upon request by”

Thank you for considering OIP’s testimony.

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Date: February 7, 2023  
Time: 1:01 p.m.  
Where: State Capitol, Conference Room 229  
RE: Supporting SB1231 Relating to Digital Equity

Aloha mai e Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and Members of the Committee,

As members of the Broadband Hui, the listed organizations and individuals SUPPORT SB 1231, which establishes the Digital Equity Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects.

Over the past two years, 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.

One of the components critical to the progress of digital equity for our community is that of funding capacity sooner than the federal programs which this bill aims to address.

**Work to continue to address these needs are now. This funding will be targeted to support Hawaii's local, community non-profits to maintain its momentum on digital equity until federal funding becomes available.**

For these reasons, we kindly request you support SB1231. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. (Please see names on the following pages.)

## Logos of Supporting Organizations



Name	Organization	Email	Zip code
Ken Farm		farmk@hawaii.edu	96817
Lynn Otaguro	O`ahu County Democrats Digital Equity Committee	lmotaguro@yahoo.com	96821



<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Zip code</b>
Angelina Mercado	Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence	amercado@hscadv.org	98614
DOUGLASS S ADAMS	County of Hawaii Dept of Research & Development	douglass.adams@hawaiicounty.gov	96720
Jill Takasaki Canfield	Hawaii Literacy	jill.takasaki.canfield@hawaiiliteracy.org	96817
Kaleo Bennett	'Auamo Collaborative	kokua@auamocollaborative.org	96720
Mayson Asano Jr		molokaishaka@yahoo.com	96748
Nicholas Winfrey	Maui United Way	nicholas@mauiunitedway.org	96708
Peter Dames	Servco Pacific Inc	peter.dames@servco.com	96814
WANDA ANAE-ONISHI		wanaeonishi@gmail.com	96797
Riley Saito	Succeed Hawaii, LLC	rsaito@succeedhawaii.com	96740
David Sun-Miyashiro	HawaiiKidsCAN	david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org	96814
Jaclyn Kaina	Kauai Economic Development Board	jkaina@kedb.com	96766
Matt Stevens	Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative	matt@hawaiiwork.org	96755
Herb Lee, Jr.	Pacific American Foundation	herblee@thepaf.org	96734
Alexis Ching		alexis@ewaluindustries.org	96740
Nathan Prescott	County of Kauai - Office of Economic Development	nprescott@kauai.gov	96766
Rachel Solemsaas	Hawai'i Community College	rsolems@hawaii.edu	96720
Mary Oneha	Waimanalo Health Center	moneha@waimanalohealth.org	96795
LORNA STRAND		LORNA.STRAND@GMAIL.COM	96701
David Earles	Junior Achievement of Hawaii	david@jahawaii.org	96815
Deborah Bond-Upson	LearningBond	deborah@learningbond.org	96734
Wayne Buente		wayne.buente@gmail.com	96826
Ka'ala Souza	Digital Ready Hawaii	kaala@digitalreadyhawaii.org	96734
Jeanne Skog	Skog Rasmussen LLC	jskog@skograsmussen.com	96793
Georgette Stevens	'Ōlelo Community Media	gstevens@olelo.org	96819
Joseph Passantino	Ke'elikolani Middle School	Joseph.passantino@k12.hi.us	96813
Jay April, President & CEO	Akaku Maui County Community Media	jay@akaku.org	96732
Jeanne Skog	Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii	jskog2435@gmail.com	96708
Kiran Polk	Kapolei Chamber of Commerce	kiranpolk@gmail.com	96707
Keilee Simms		keilees@keyproject.org	96744
Judith Mikami	Molokai Rural Health Community Association	jmikami44@gmail.com	96748

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Zip code</b>
Gregory DiBenedetto		gregdib@yahoo.com	96778
Dr. Adrienne Dillard, Ph.D., MSW, LSW	Kula no na Po'e Hawaii o Papakolea, Kewalo, Kalawahine	kula.papakolea@gmail.com	96813
Sean Taketa McLaughlin		seantaketa@gmail.com	96817
Joseph Lapilio	Waianae Economic Development Council	j.lapilio@thewedc.com	96792
Alexandra Slous	Perspective Media	ali@createwithperspective.com	96734
Mahealani Keo	Nurture Cultivate Inc	mahealani.keo@ncihawaii.org	96717
Kuulei Arce	MOLOKAI RURAL HEALTH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION	22kuulei@gmail.com	96729
Linda Clark		clarkl004@gmail.com	96713
Jenny Miller	EducationSuperHighway	jenny.miller@educationsuperhighway.org	80303
Todd Robertson	Hyperspective Studios, Inc.	todd@hyperspective.com	96813
Brian Dote	Tapiki LLC	brian@tapiki.com	96797
Daniel C. Smith, PhD		dancsmith@rocketmail.com	96782
Ian Kitajima	PICHTR	ian.kitajima@pichtr.org	96814

February 6, 2023

Committee on Energy, Economic Development & Tourism  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair,  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair



*Working together for Kapolei*

Tuesday, February 7, 2023, 1:01 p.m.  
Conference Rm. 229 and via Videoconference

**RE: SB 1231 RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Committee:

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for businesses in the Kapolei region which includes Waipahu to Ka'ena Point. The Chamber works on behalf of its members and the entire business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and help Kapolei businesses thrive. We are a member-driven, member-supported organization representing the interests of all types of business: small, medium or large, for profit or non-profit businesses or sole proprietorship.

**The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is in strong support of SB 1231, relating to Digital Equity which establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects.**

This funding would support and adopt the goals set forth in the State's Digital Equity Declaration. The Digital Equity Grant Program will help to ensure digital literacy and equitable access to internet to help eliminate the "digital divide" and help our underserved communities including those in West O'ahu.

We also need to increase digital capacity in West O'ahu for our small businesses to spur on economic growth and bridge some of the gaps existing today including access and capacity issues with online learning, pursuit of employment opportunities, and access to essential services online.

The need for digital equity is apparent even in the City and County of Honolulu and is not only applicable to rural areas of our state. West O'ahu's growing population of almost 200,000 includes the Wai'anae Coast, 'Ewa, and Waipahu. In Kapolei and 'Ewa alone households are expected to exceed 56,000 by the year 2035 and over the next 30 years the population in Kapolei and 'Ewa will increase by 40 percent and housing by 52 percent. The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population in East Honolulu is 3.4% and 39.7% in Wai'anae. The number of persons living in poverty in Wai'anae the is 24.4%.

The funding provided in this grant is needed now and will support community-based organizations and non-profits to do the work needing to be done to provide digital equity until federal funding becomes available.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony and comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Polk".

Kiran Polk  
Executive Director

1001 Kamokila Boulevard, Campbell Building Suite 250, Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

Written Statement of  
**Jeannine Souki**  
Senior Manager – Government & Regulatory Affairs

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

February 7, 2023, 1:01 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229, Videoconference

**SUPPORT FOR:  
S.B. 1231 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

To: Chair DeCoite, Vice-Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee  
Re: Testimony providing support for SB 1231

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit support for SB 1231 to establish a Digital Equity Grant Program within the Broadband and Digital Equity Office of the Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

Hawaiian Telcom supports the state's role in bridging the digital divide and improving the capacity of residents and businesses to participate in the fast-changing digital world. As the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the pace of digital transformation, including the rapid migration to cloud-based commerce and government services, working from home, online learning, and telemedicine, many individuals and families, and small businesses owners struggled to navigate this transition because they had either limited or no access to computers, devices or internet service or lacked proficiency to operate devices and navigate the internet. Establishing a state grant program to build digital literacy, make computers and electronic devices available to economically disadvantaged households, and help to qualify and connect individuals and families to broadband service provided through the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) will help those in need acquire skills and internet connections to keep pace with the rapid acceleration of digital technology.

We urge the state to leverage the temporary infusion of federal funds with private sector investments, especially in rural communities and areas with persistent poverty lacking infrastructure and access to broadband services, to address the digital divide. Hawaiian Telcom continues to play a significant role in closing the digital divide by investing hundreds of millions of dollars annually to build its broadband network across the state. Additionally, Hawaiian Telcom supports digital equity by providing ACP and Lifeline Program services to qualifying households. The ACP subsidy provides up to \$30 per month (higher discounts of up to \$75 per month for beneficiaries on Hawaiian Home Lands), which can cover the total cost of monthly broadband services for qualifying residents.

For these reasons, Hawaiian Telcom respectfully urges your Committee's support for SB 1231.



Feb. 7, 2023

Lynn DeCoite  
Senate Energy, Economic Development and Tourism  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Senate Bill 1231

Chair DeCoite and Committee Members:

We have questions about the confidentiality provision of this bill relating to digital equity.

We ask you to amend this portion of the bill that appears to be overly broad due to the vague term "commercially sensitive information."

Hawaii law already provides for protection for confidential commercial or financial information. The term commercially sensitive information is not defined and appears to be overly broad.

Please keep transparency as allowed in other such programs.

Thank you for your attention,

Stirling Morita  
President  
Hawaii Chapter SPJ

THE CIVIL BEAT  
LAW CENTER FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST

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Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

**RE: Testimony Opposing S.B. 1231, Relating to Digital Equity**  
Hearing: February 7, 2023 at 1:01 p.m.

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Black. I am the Executive Director of the Civil Beat Law Center for the Public Interest, a nonprofit organization whose primary mission concerns solutions that promote governmental transparency. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **opposing the vague confidentiality provision in S.B. 1231.**

This bill allows an applicant for these grants of State funds to declare that any portion of the grant application cannot be disclosed to the public because it has “commercially sensitive information.” Sec. -6(b). The Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA) already permits a government agency to withhold “confidential commercial or financial information” from the public. *E.g.*, OIP Op. No. F21-02. That standard carefully considers the competitive harm of disclosure and is balanced to ensure appropriate public oversight of use of State funds. *Id.*

S.B. 1231 incorporates the UIPA exceptions, but it goes further to exempt “commercially sensitive information.” Entities requesting taxpayer monies – through contracting or grants – frequently believe that large swaths of information provided to an agency should be withheld from the public. By giving private entities unilateral authority to designate portions of a grant application as confidential, S.B. 1231 eliminates the public’s ability to understand how public funds are being expended.

Also, “commercially sensitive information” has no legal meaning. S.B. 1231 provides no definition or context for what records – beyond those normally covered by the UIPA exceptions – are intended to be protected by this exemption.

The Law Center respectfully requests that the Committee strike “or comprises commercially sensitive information” from Sec. -6(b).

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify **opposing the confidentiality provision in S.B. 1231.**



Charter Communications

Testimony of Rebecca Lieberman, Director of Government Affairs

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

Hawaii State Capitol

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

**COMMENTS ON S.B. 1231 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on S.B. 1231, a bill that would establish the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects.

As the largest broadband provider in the state, Charter supports efforts to promote digital equity and broadband access and we **support the intent of this bill**. A key aspect of reducing the digital divide is by investing in broadband infrastructure, digital navigators and literacy tools, affordability programs, and access to hardware.

Charter believes that every Hawaii resident should have reliable access to the Internet. We will continue to help bring the benefits of broadband and access to the internet to those who need it most. Hawaii is slated to receive over \$200 million in federal grants for broadband infrastructure in the immediate future (via the Coronavirus Capital Project Fund and Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program), in addition to private investments already being made by the industry. The

Digital Equity Grant Program should prioritize funding projects related to broadband adoption and affordability programs, which are separately supported by federal funding.

With this in mind, Charter requests amending the bill to better define the scope of approved projects and exclude broadband infrastructure projects from the program. This will ensure that broadband adoption efforts and broadband availability efforts are each given the independent attention needed to properly address these very different issues. Infrastructure availability and digital equity are both important, but they are different problems requiring different, independent solutions. Specifically, we suggest the following amendments:

- Page 3, Section 1, Line 1, insert the following new language:

“Broadband infrastructure” means the medium used to provide broadband service, including fiber optic cable, copper cable, coaxial cable, and wireless media, such as satellite communications, wireless networks, and worldwide interoperability for microwave access.

- Page 5, Section 3, Lines 3-6 shall be amended to read as follows:

**-3 Eligible projects.** The office may award grants for eligible projects; provided that on the date the application is submitted, the area to be served by the project shall include covered populations. Projects that include the deployment of broadband infrastructure are ineligible.

In 2021 alone, Charter extended its network to reach an additional 20,000 homes and small businesses in Hawaii, investing more than \$106 million in the state. Additionally, Charter is pleased to now provide high-speed data services to beneficiaries living in the Hawaiian Homelands following a



recent announcement by DHHL, which allows homesteaders to obtain telecommunications services from a provider of their choice.

Charter is a member of DBEDT's weekly Broadband Hui to assist in strategic broadband planning and closing the digital divide. Additionally, Charter participated in the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB) and is now participating in the \$14.2 billion federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The EBB, and now the ACP, has helped connect over 38,000 eligible households in Hawaii with high-speed broadband during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Broadband internet access is more important than ever and the ACP offers a tremendous opportunity to help low-income families stay connected, providing eligible households a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service and up to \$75 per month for households on the Hawaiian Home Lands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide suggested amendments to S.B. 1231.

**SB-1231**

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 12:24:17 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/7/2023 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaala Souza	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am 100% in support of community-based and community-lead digital equity projects. A digital equity grant program would help our state achieve the highest levels of digital readiness.

A partial list of communities that have been doing digital equity work can be found on this google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps/@20.7023065,-157.7972893,9z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!6m1!1s!i0Uup8yRI2WXuCikNugVIIF7Osnmu9s>

Over the past year just in these communities alone we have had classes on basic computer skills for over 1000 people and given away just under 1000 computers to participants who want to become digitally literate.

In the 1820s King Kamehameha III, Kauikeaouli, said

"He aupuni palapala ko'u" -- mine will be a kingdom of literacy.

Within a generation Hawaii had one of the highest reading literacy rates of any nation in the world. With public and private support we can have one of the highest **digital** literacy rates anywhere where everyone has the opportunities and the options digital tools and skills offer.

That's the vision this Digital Equity Grant Program can help actualize and bring to fruition.

**SB-1231**

Submitted on: 2/3/2023 5:21:20 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/7/2023 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ryan Kawaihani Ozawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support and provide comments on SB1231/HB1408, which renews the state digital equity program and funds it with an initial \$5 million in non-duplicative general funds, insofar as it could be complementary to the federal NTIA State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program. That program will not launch until late this year and is dependent on the completion of the state Digital Equity plan by DBEDT.

This bill and state funding allocation, then, could deliver benefits sooner than the planned federal program, albeit on a small scale.

Ideally, this proposal should be AMENDED to require coordination with other state Digital Equity efforts to prevent redundant administrative activities and expenses. In particular, the state Digital Equity plan should be the priority of DBEDT this year, and the University of Hawaii and other stakeholders have the front-line, on-the-ground knowledge and resources to oversee the resulting funded grant program.

**SB-1231**

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 11:34:17 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/7/2023 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stong support. Thank you.

**SB-1231**

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 12:37:05 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/7/2023 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anna Gustafson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We've been teaching adult digital literacy at Palama Settlement for a little over a year now. Our students use computers and WiFi that Palama provides, but have little or no access to these resources at home. I'm a huge supporter of this bill which may give access to these resources and help achieve digital equity in our community.