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Written Comments

SB699, SD2 **RELATING TO STATE CAPITOL TOURS**

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Presented to the House Committee on Legislative Management

Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 3:00 p.m.
Room 312 & Via Videoconference

Chair Nakamura and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon, Chair Nakamura and members of the Committee, my name is Charlotte Carter-Yamauchi, and I am the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB). Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written **comments** on S.B. No. 699, S.D. 2, Relating to State Capitol Tours.

The purpose of this measure is to establish within the Legislative Reference Bureau's Public Access Room (PAR) a State Capitol Tours program, to be administered and facilitated by the PAR Coordinator, and which shall include in-person guided and self-guided walking tours, and virtual tours, of the Hawaii State Capitol building. The measure also requires that:

- (1) Paper brochures and information about the virtual tour website be made available to the public in PAR; and
- (2) Administration of virtual tours of the Capitol include regular maintenance and updating of a virtual tour website.

The measure also includes an appropriation in an unspecified amount for the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position within PAR to provide capitol tours.

The Bureau takes no position on this measure but has serious concerns and submits the following comments for your consideration.

PAR was established in 1994 with the core mission of enhancing the public's ability to participate in the legislative process; it became part of LRB in 1996. PAR's office and services are utilized year-round, offering equipment, services, and facilities to members of the public who seek to participate in the legislative process. This measure provides funds for a permanent full-time equivalent position to be placed within PAR to conduct and host capitol tours but does not seem to consider other challenges that PAR will incur if required to establish, maintain, and operate such a program. For example, if the intended scope of the tour program is to include large groups, such as providing tours for classes of school children, PAR would need additional space within the Capitol building to ensure that tours do not interfere with PAR's core services, especially during the legislative session when the PAR room is often filled to capacity. We note that neither PAR nor the Bureau has any expertise with respect to creating, managing, or conducting a tour program or with creating, maintaining, and updating a State Capitol Tours webpage.

Historically, the State Capitol Tours program has been housed in the Office of the Governor, most recently in its Community Relations area. To this point, the Office of the Governor already has a "Hawai'i State Capitol Tours" page on its website that includes a virtual tour and a self-guided tour brochure. Given its historical expertise in running a tour program and having a pre-existing State Capitol Tours webpage, substantially more existing space within the Capitol building than PAR, and considerably more resources than the Bureau or PAR, the Office of the Governor seems to be the appropriate entity in which to statutorily establish a Hawaii State Capitol Tours program. We note that this is especially so given that jurisdiction over the Capitol building resides with the executive branch, rather than the legislative branch.

We also note the testimony of the Lieutenant Governor on this measure before the Senate Committee on Government Operations, in which she professed her belief that this function is currently and appropriately housed in the Office of the Governor. Further, the Lieutenant Governor noted that if her office was tasked with this responsibility, they would need the following resources to successfully fulfill programmatic needs:

- Two (2) additional FTE to coordinate and provide tours, of which one (1) FTE is fluent in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i to ensure both official languages of the State of Hawaii are spoken
- Funding to procure, clean, operate, and maintain individual audio systems for self-guided tours
- Funding and support to produce tour materials and signage in foreign languages.

Should the Committee decide that it still would like the Bureau, through PAR, to take over responsibility for the State Capitol Tours program currently operated by the Governor, we respectfully request that the Committee:

- (1) Clarify the scope of work involved and seriously consider the spatial, technological, and experiential challenges that creation, maintenance, and operation of such a program would create within PAR and the disruption this would present to PAR's core mission; and
- (2) Provide sufficient resources to truly enable PAR to successfully carry out this responsibility, as are detailed in the Lieutenant Governor's testimony and referenced above.

Thank you again for your consideration.