

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1570

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 02 2025

RE: S.R. No. 35
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Government Operations, to which was referred S.R. No. 35 entitled:

"SENATE RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE COMPTROLLER TO COOPERATE WITH THE HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY RURAL AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES IN THE STATE WITH A NEED FOR BETTER TELECOMMUNICATION ACCESS FOR RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to request the Comptroller to cooperate with the Hawaii State Public Library System to identify rural and underserved communities in the State with a need for better telecommunication access for residents to participate in the state legislative process.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i State Public Library System, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and two individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Accounting and General Services.

Your Committee finds that participating in the state legislative process is a basic right of citizenship which some residents, especially those in rural and underserved communities, struggle to exercise due to limited access to telecommunication



services. The Hawaii State Public Library System, however, has the necessary infrastructure and resources to offer these services to the public. Therefore, this measure requests the Comptroller to cooperate with the Hawaii State Public Library system to identify communities in need of assistance as the first step in facilitating improved access to the state legislative process for all.

Your Committee acknowledges the concerns raised in testimony that the Hawaii State Public Library System is already well-equipped with the infrastructure and resources necessary to assist the public throughout the State in participating in the state legislative process and would benefit most from a public outreach campaign promoting awareness of the availability of these services. Your Committee further notes the concerns raised by the Department of Accounting and General Services that the Department does not have the subject matter expertise to effectuate this measure and the Public Access Room of the Legislative Reference Bureau may be better suited, given its mandate to assist the public in participating in the legislative process. Therefore, this measure needs to be amended to address these matters.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requesting the Legislative Reference Bureau, rather than the Comptroller, to cooperate with the Hawaii State Public Library System to identify rural and underserved communities with a need for better telecommunication access for residents, including those with developmental disabilities, to participate in the state legislative process;
- (2) Inserting language requesting the Public Access Room to collaborate with the Hawaii State Public Library System to establish an outreach program to notify the public regarding the availability of library infrastructure to support remote public participation in the state legislative process;
- (3) Deleting language that would have requested the Comptroller and State Librarian to submit a report to the Legislature prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026;



- (4) Inserting language requesting the Legislative Reference Bureau to submit a report to the Legislature on the implementation of the outreach program and recommendations to further improve public access to the state legislative process prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026;
- (5) Inserting language clarifying legislative intent in accordance with its amended purpose; and
- (6) Amending its title accordingly.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Government Operations that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.R. No. 35, as amended herein, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto as S.R. No. 35, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Government
Operations,



ANGUS L.K. MCKELVEY, Chair



SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO COOPERATE WITH THE HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY RURAL AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES IN THE STATE WITH A NEED FOR BETTER TELECOMMUNICATION ACCESS FOR RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

1 WHEREAS, providing access for residents to participate in
2 the state legislative process is a basic right of citizenship in
3 the State and should continue to be a priority; and
4

5 WHEREAS, ensuring equitable access to the state legislative
6 process for nearly four hundred fifty thousand residents on the
7 neighbor islands, as well as those in rural O‘ahu, is essential
8 to strengthening civic engagement, enhancing the effectiveness
9 of the legislative process, and ensuring fair and accurate
10 representation on issues impacting the entire State; and
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12 WHEREAS, with the rising costs of airfare, gas, and
13 lodging, providing designated locations or state offices on
14 neighbor islands and in rural O‘ahu where citizens can
15 participate remotely in the state legislative process will help
16 reduce the financial burden of participation and further boost
17 civic engagement; and
18

19 WHEREAS, the Hawaii State Public Library System has long
20 provided free public access to broadband Internet and computer
21 equipment and is therefore well-prepared to serve as a conduit
22 for facilitating remote legislative participation; and
23

24 WHEREAS, with a network of fifty-one libraries across the
25 State, all of which have broadband capabilities and various
26 electronic devices, including Chromebooks, the Hawaii State
27 Public Library System has the infrastructure and resources to
28 support public access to the Internet and videoconferencing,
29 making it uniquely well-suited to assist individuals in
30 participating in the state legislative process; and
31



1 WHEREAS, the Legislative Reference Bureau has been tasked
2 with publicizing and educating the community and public at large
3 about the state legislative process, including ways in which
4 residents may testify on measures; and
5

6 WHEREAS, given its mandate and the existing infrastructure
7 in public libraries, it may be productive for the Public Access
8 Room of the Legislative Reference Bureau to publicize the
9 availability of tools within the Hawaii State Public Library
10 System to participate in the state legislative process; now,
11 therefore,
12

13 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
14 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
15 that the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to cooperate
16 with the Hawaii State Public Library System to identify rural
17 and underserved communities with a need for better
18 telecommunication access for residents, including those with
19 developmental disabilities, to participate in the state
20 legislative process; and
21

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Access Room of the
23 Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to collaborate with
24 the Hawaii State Public Library System to establish an outreach
25 program to notify the public regarding the availability of
26 library infrastructure to support remote public participation in
27 the state legislative process; and
28

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
30 Bureau is requested to submit to the Legislature a report on the
31 implementation of the outreach program, including its findings
32 and recommendations to further improve public access to the
33 state legislative process, including any proposed legislation,
34 no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular
35 Session of 2026; and
36

37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
38 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Legislative
39 Reference Bureau, State Librarian, and Executive Director of the
40 Disability and Communication Access Board.

