

ACT 286

H.B. NO. 429

A Bill for an Act Making an Appropriation for Blindness Skill Training.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The National Federation for the Blind has found that many older adults with vision problems lack proficiency in the basic skills of cooking, traveling, and communicating and are unable to successfully complete those tasks which are common to everyday life, such as preparing a meal, shopping for essentials, or writing checks. Unnecessary institutionalization and the accompanying costs of long-term health care for any of these individuals exact a great personal and

financial toll. The teaching of what is known as blindness skills and their application to real-life situations is imperative to prevent this from occurring wherever possible.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to establish four rehabilitation teacher positions who will teach blindness skills that enable individuals age fifty-five or older who are legally blind or who have severe visual impairment to live as independently as possible. The teachers will work with those one thousand nine hundred thirteen people over the age of fifty-five on the department of human services blind register and those numerous persons who are blind or have a visual impairment over the age of fifty-five who are not registered, by teaching blindness skills and delivering independent living services in their home or places of residence.

The U.S. Department of Education is offering a generous grant that will bring in almost ten times as much federal money, \$225,000, as the \$25,000 in state money requested in this appropriation. This is a win-win situation for the State.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$25,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2001-2002 to bring in \$225,000 in federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration's Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind grant to fund four rehabilitation teacher positions in the department of human services.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of human services for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2001.

(Approved June 28, 2001.)