

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **243**-24

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 12**, 2024

RE: H.B. No. 1977  
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2024  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.B. No. 1977 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO BRAILLE LITERACY,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the individualized education programs of blind students to include the instruction of Braille and provision of Braille instructional materials under certain circumstances;
- (2) Require the Department of Education to establish a Braille Literacy Resource Center; and
- (3) Appropriate funds to the Department of Education to make grants or enter into contracts with qualified entities to provide in-state Braille transcription services or to provide financial support to a qualified entity for the establishment of Braille transcription services.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Disability Rights Center; National Federation of the Blind Hawaii; Hawaii Association of the Blind; and eight individuals. Your Committee received testimony in support of the

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intent of this measure from the Disability and Communication Access Board. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Education; Department of the Attorney General; and Department of Human Services.

Your Committee finds that literacy skills are necessary for success in education, employment, and life for all members of society, including individuals who are blind. Your Committee further finds that Braille literacy skills are fundamental for individuals who are blind to learn, seek and maintain remunerative employment, and access the opportunities in life open to all regardless of disability. Your Committee believes that it is the interest of the State to make learning opportunities available to all residents. Therefore, your Committee finds it necessary to promote Braille instruction and the timely access to braille instructional materials for blind students, parents, teachers, and other school personnel.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Removing the requirement for current and future needs reading and writing performance assessments to be made prior to determining if instruction in Braille or Braille instructional materials is not necessary for a student;
- (2) Deleting language that would have required Braille literacy instruction to be sufficient to enable a student to achieve at least grade level reading and writing proficiency expected of the student's peers of comparable ability;
- (3) Clarifying that a student's individualized education program:
  - (A) Shall provide the date of the student's next literacy assessment if an assessment is to be conducted; and
  - (B) Is not required to include the parents or the student's signed concurrence to exclude Braille literacy instruction and Braille instructional materials from the student's individualized



education program until the next assessment of the student's literacy needs;

- (4) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (5) 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 Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1977, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1977, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Education,

  
JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Chair



