



The Senate

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SENATE OFFERS VIDEOCONFERENCING OPTION FOR PUBLIC TESTIMONY STATEWIDE

Honolulu – Beginning this legislative session, all Hawaii residents will now have the chance to testify at hearings before the Senate Committees on Education (EDU) and Technology and the Arts (TEC) without physically being there. In January 2013, the Senate began a pilot project to allow neighbor island residents the opportunity to participate in the legislative process without traveling to Oahu. Understanding that access is also a barrier for Oahu residents, the committees will now pilot the videoconferencing technology statewide.

"Ensuring access and citizen and stakeholder participation is especially important when it comes to issues dealing with public education and our schools," said Senator Jill Tokuda, chairwoman of the Senate Education Committee. "Expanding our use of this type of technology to connect people with policymakers will only strengthen and enhance the quality of legislation produced."

The Hawaii State Senate will launch its Statewide Videoconferencing Pilot Program beginning with the Senate Committee on Education's first hearing on Monday, January 27, 2014 at 1:15 p.m. and continue with hearings from both the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Committee on Technology and the Arts throughout the 2014 Legislative Session.

"It's not uncommon for people to have to sit through a two-hour hearing just to speak for one minute on one measure," added Senator Glenn Wakai, chairman of the Senate Technology and Arts Committee. "If we can reduce the barriers to civic engagement by reducing the cost and time people spend to voice their concerns, we are on our way to creating a better Hawaii."

In its inaugural year, the Neighbor Island Videoconferencing Program was piloted by the Senate Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Technology and the Arts. In its second year, the two committees will continue to pilot this project, increasing the amount of constituents that can be reached and who can testify by expanding statewide. Hearing notices for the pilot project hearings will indicate that videoconferencing testimony will be allowed and contain a link to instructions for the public on how to participate. Because this is a pilot project, there are some limitations to how many individuals are able to participate. Following the completion of the legislative session, the project will be evaluated.

During Monday's Senate Education Committee, lawmakers will take up two measures that address air conditioning in schools. The bills call for the creation of a master strategic plan for the cooling of public schools.

For more information on the hearing and instructions on how to submit testimony and/or participate via videoconferencing or in person, please refer to the hearing notice at: http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2014/hearingnotices/HEARING_EDU_01-27-14_.HTM

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