



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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March 10, 2020
Rm. 225, 3:05 p.m.

To: The Honorable Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Laura H. Thielen, Chair
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations

From: Liann Ebesugawa, Chair
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: S.C.R. No. 4/ S.R. No. 3

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai‘i’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state-funded services (on the basis of disability). The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5.

The HCRC supports S.C.R. No. 4 and S.R. No. 3.

S.C.R. No. 4 and S.R. No. 3, if adopted, request a working group on accessible government documents be convened, led by Disability Communication Access Board (DCAB) and Office of Enterprise Technology (OET or ETS).

Accessibility of state government documents is important, and is required under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The HCRC is willing to participate in the proposed working group, but defers to the subject matter expertise of DCAB on Title II accessibility requirements. The HCRC supports systematic efforts to address accessibility issues, rather than the current approach of leaving it to each individual department to make their posted documents accessible and ADA compliant. ETS and DCAB should have the resources to assist and support all departments in compliance with provision of accessible documents as required by law.

The HCRC supports S.C.R. No. 4 and S.R. No. 3.

Testimony Before The Committees on Human Services (HMS) and Government Operations
March 10, 2020, 3:05 PM, hearing on SCR 4/SR 3

Aloha Chair and Committee members,

My name is Katie Keim residing at 2943 Kalakaua Ave. I am an officer and member of The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii. As an organization of blind individuals, speaking for ourselves, we are in strong support of the resolution before you today.

The technology is already in place to ensure that individuals with disabilities can have equal access to all material that our non-disabled peers can access within government. The establishment of a committee supports a step in the right direction toward our full access to government information and documents. Having been part of committees for equal accessibility in the past, please seriously consider ensuring the committee has individuals with disabilities as full and active participating decision making members of the committee alongside the qualified technology team to ensure actual useful access.

The ability to independently and privately absentee vote, pay property taxes, fill out government job applications, read state regulations and statutes, fill out internal forms for those blind and disabled individuals who already work for government, and the ability to fully access government information through material is critical to our success as citizens of Hawaii.

Mahalo for your time and consideration of this important step forward which will enable us as blind citizens to fully participate in all affairs with our government and community.

To: Committee of Human Services &
Committee of Government Operations

From: Deannie Nakaza, Member of the National of the Blind of Hawaii

Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Time: 3:05 pm

Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

Subject: In Support of S.C.R. 4 & S. R. 3

I am a member of the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii. Also, a student earning my Master's degree at the Myron B. Thompson School Social of Work.

I support S.C.R. 4 and S.R 3 because despite the fact that vision and non-sighted community have a disadvantage, this resolution can assist in alleviating much of the stress. This resolution will provide equal accessibility to government documents. Furthermore, the accessibility can help bridge the communication gap between government agencies and the low vision and non-sighted community.

It is surprisingly that government documents are not assessable to all citizens. A fraction of the low vision and non-sighted are equally concerned and involved in the legislation process. With the world progressing, sophisticated communication technology has found a way to enhance the accessibility of all sorts of documents. Have you ever had a document and wanting to access but couldn't because it was not assessable?

Also, this resolution can embark on a new beginning for the low vision and non-sighted community to collaborate with the working groups mentioned in the resolution. The collaboration can provide a greater insight and knowledge to accommodate their needs.

Therefore, by passing S.C.R. 4 and S.C. 3, the low vision and non-sighted community can gain social and economic inclusion in the legislative process.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SR-3

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 12:41:22 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/10/2020 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Justin Salisbury	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Mahalo for bringing this bill to a hearing.

We have needed progress in this area for a long time. As a blind person, I have found so many important government forms that I could not access. This has led to many delays in service delivery for me and for many other people in Hawaii. If a service is delayed forever, that's basically the same thing as denying it to us; in fact, it is crueler because it gives us false hope that the service may eventually be delivered.

I had the unfortunate experience of needing to file a disability discrimination complaint form, and then the disability discrimination complaint form was also inaccessible. In other words, the same lack of accessibility that required me to file a complaint in the first place also prevented me from filing the complaint.

It is not difficult to make our government documents accessible. If accessibility is never considered, it often does not happen. If it is brought in as an afterthought, then it is often more work. If accessibility is considered in the design phase (at the very beginning), it is extremely easy.

Many of our government documents are woefully out of date. This initiative may lead us to look at old forms that ought to be updated, anyway.

If I am able to access the documents myself, then I don't have to bother someone else to pull them away from their jobs to help me get around that access barrier. The work that will be involved in the initiative discussed in this resolution will be less than the summation of the ongoing losses in productivity that come from the problem.

