



**Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Monday, March 29, 2021; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 161, HOUSE DRAFT 1/HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 137, HOUSE DRAFT 1, SUPPORTING AND ADOPTING THE GOALS SET FORTH IN THE DIGITAL EQUITY DECLARATION FOR HAWAII ADOPTED BY THE BROADBAND HUI.

Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Concurrent Resolution No. 161, House Draft 1, and House Resolution No. 137, House Draft 1.

The resolutions, as received by your Committee, would support and adopt the goals set forth in the Digital Equity Declaration that was adopted by the Broadband Hui.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

Hawaii has long been at the forefront of integrating newer technologies into daily life. One example of this is Hawaii's Telehealth Law which has served as a model across the United States. Yet, it was only after COVID struck our islands that this law became fully integrated into daily life.

Today, it is common practice to ZOOM or SKYPE with your health practitioner instead of physically going to the provider's office for a visit. When COVID first hit our islands, many health providers had to limit the number of patients that could be serviced in-person because of a scarcity of Personal Protective Equipment, restrictions in the gatherings of groups, and the need for changes to the physical arrangement of examination rooms and other diagnostic facilities.

Testimony on House Concurrent Resolution No. 161, House Draft 1/House Resolution No. 137, House Draft 1

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For people with adequate broadband access, telehealth was a lifeline for the provision of essential primary health care services. Yet, health care facilities in rural areas experienced the same problems when COVID hit. They too had to limit the number of patients they could see. But because these communities lacked adequate broadband access, they were effectively cut off from primary care. Many were forced to bear their maladies until it became necessary to go to the emergency room.

The Governor's suspension of a statute that prohibits the use of standard telephonic service in telehealth has temporarily eased this inequity. For those without adequate broadband, at least for now, they are able to obtain basic primary care services over landline telephones. But that is neither adequate, tenable, nor fair to the thousands of citizens who lack broadband access.

Because of this, the HPCA views the lack of broadband access in rural areas as an issue of social equity. In this day and age, everyone should have equal access to health care. Telehealth was envisioned as the means of leveling the field between urban and rural areas. The lack of broadband ensures that urban and rural communities remain unequal.

As a member of the Broadband Hui, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of these resolutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



Young Democrats of Hawai'i

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**Policy and Research
Director**

March 28, 2021

House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

Aloha Chair Johanson, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The Young Democrats of Hawai'i (YDHI) **supports HCR161 and HR137**, which would support and adopt the goals set forth in the Digital Equity Declaration for Hawai'i adopted by the Broadband Hui.

YDHI is a caucus under the Democratic Party of Hawai'i. Our mission is to increase the political strength of our members by providing opportunities for civic engagement, political advocacy, and participation in the Democratic Party of Hawai'i.

In 2020, our membership established our top three legislative priorities, voting to advocate for affordable housing, healthcare, and the economy.

We support HCR161 and HR137 because the resolutions both directly address our membership's desire for a healthy local economy in the following ways:

- It would support efforts to expand online literacy and technological education opportunities for Hawai'i residents.
- It would highlight the need to address digital inequities around the state due to racial, economic, and geographical factors, which have only been made worse during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It would acknowledge the need to embrace the power of modern digital technology in both government and the local economy.

These steps would recognize and help achieve a vision of a connected and technologically fluent population that will be able to participate in and take advantage of the benefits of a modern, digital economy. This vision, if achieved, would promote local economic growth and expand Hawai'i's global economic reach.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill, and we urge you to pass HCR161 and HR137 to help create the vibrant, diverse economy our membership desires and deserves.

Sincerely,
The Young Democrats of Hawai'i

Testimony of the
OAHU ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD (OEDB)
In Support of HR137 HD1
**SUPPORTING AND ADOPTING THE GOALS SET FORTH IN THE DIGITAL EQUITY
DECLARATION FOR HAWAII ADOPTED BY THE BROADBAND HUI**

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Monday, March 29, 2021

2:00 P.M.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Johanson and Vice Chair Kitagawa,

On behalf of Oahu Economic Development Board, I strongly **support** HR137 HD1. This resolution supports the adoption of the goals identified in the Digital Equity Declaration raised by the Broadband Hui, which OEDB is proud to be a cosignatory of.

The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on learning and work outcomes for the most vulnerable in our communities emphasizes how equitable access to the internet is essential to thriving communities, and thereby Hawaii's economic vitality.

In 2020, The Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii helped to address the major economic downturn by facilitating the Aloha Connects Innovation Program (ACI). ACI provided paid training and employment at locally-owned businesses to individuals who were displaced from their jobs because of the pandemic. Many of these internships were run exclusively online, which increased capacity for employers and allowed candidates to take on employment they may not have been able to gain otherwise. This is just one example of how digital equity will further the positive impact of innovative initiatives in our communities.

Supporting and adopting the goals set forth in the Digital Equity Declaration is essential to innovating for a brighter future for Hawaii.

Mahalo,



Pono Shim

CEO, Oahu Economic Development Board



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March 29, 2021

Representative Aaron Johanson, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
Via Videoconference
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony supporting HCR 161, HD1, and HR 137, HD1

Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and committee members:

My name is Christine Sakuda and I serve as the executive director of Transform Hawai'i Government (THG), a coalition of organizations and individuals who advocate for an accessible, accountable and responsive state government that leverages technology to help citizens, communities, and businesses throughout Hawai'i to thrive. We provide a consistent and persistent voice to keep modernization a top priority of state government.

THG supports House Concurrent Resolution 161, HD1, and House Resolution 137, HD1, which are supporting and adopting the goals set forth in the Digital Equity Declaration that was adopted by the Broadband Hui.

THG has made long-term investments in promoting efficient and effective digital government in Hawai'i. Adopting the goals set forth in the Digital Equity Declaration is integral to fulfilling the Hawaii Information Technology Strategic Plan, which we played a role in helping to initiate. We believe that the resolution is an important step toward meeting the objectives of the plan. We have also played a role in helping to convene the members of the Broadband Hui and wish to continue to serve as a resource to it and to the legislature.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it abundantly clear that improvements can be made in the way government serves its citizens and that technology is an important part of improving access to government services. We believe that now is the time to commit to developing long-term vision, goals, and objectives to fast forward the economic and social recovery in a way that creates new opportunities well beyond the challenges we face today. Please favorably consider House Concurrent Resolution 161, HD1, and House Resolution 137, HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony supporting these resolutions.

Respectfully submitted,



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