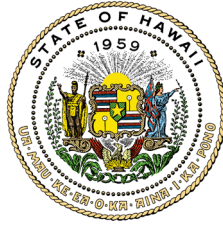


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH



CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR

Telephone
(808) 586-0100

Fax
(808) 586-0185

STATE OF HAWAII
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB2437 SD1
Relating to The Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATOR GILBERT S.C. KEITH-AGARAN, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: March 2, 2022
10:15 AM

Room Number: 211
Via Videoconference

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health, is providing comments on SB2437 SD1, Relating to The Neighbor Islands Blind and
3 Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program.

4 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates an unspecified amount of funds to the
5 department of human services for fiscal year 2022-2023 to establish and operate the neighbor
6 island blind and visually impaired service pilot program.

7 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this bill is to establish a neighbor island blind and
8 visually impaired service pilot program that provides training and other services to our hidden
9 blind or visually impaired individuals living on the neighbor islands. It also requires the
10 Department of Human Services to report to the 2025 Legislative session.

11 Mr. Philip Ana is EOA's Long-Term Care Disabilities Specialist. His job is to take calls from the
12 community statewide, answer questions, provide resources, and offer technical assistance as

1 needed. When he makes a connection, he can hear the joy of the caller on the other side of the
2 line. The person is relieved and grateful that help is on the way.

3 Mr. Ana strongly believes this is what this proposal is all about. Testimonies for SB2437 spoke
4 loud and clear that there is a strong desire to support other blind individuals, like Mr. Ana, who
5 do not have the same opportunities as those living on Oahu.

6 Is there hidden blindness in our community? Mr. Ana says yes there is, especially on the
7 neighbor islands, where services are limited.

8 **Recommendation:** EOA strongly supports the intent of this measure provided that its enactment
9 does not reduce or replace priorities with the Administration's budget request.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129

March 2, 2022

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senate Bill 2437, Senate Draft 1 – Relating to the Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 2437, Senate Draft 1 Relating to the Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program. This bill would require the Department of Human Services to establish a neighbor islands blind and visually impaired service pilot program to provide training and other services to blind residents residing on neighbor islands.

Equivalent programs and services are not available on the neighbor islands. The pilot program would provide statistics needed to support the need for training and services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired who live on the neighbor islands. Providing training, services and support to individuals who are blind and visually impaired on their respective island improves quality of life and independence.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Pagano

for KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**

P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2437, S.D. 1

March 2, 2022

10:15 a.m.

Room 211 and Videoconference

**RELATING TO THE NEIGHBOR ISLANDS BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM**

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2437, S.D. 1: 1) establishes the Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program (NIBVISPP) within the Department of Human Services (DHS); 2) sets program service requirements for NIBVISPP regarding the types of services provided and the provision of services by volunteers; 3) requires DHS to contract with a nonprofit organization to recruit and manage NIBVISPP's volunteers and to oversee the provision of services; 4) sets reporting requirements for DHS; 5) provides definitions for clarity; and 6) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds, with non-supplanting and matching funds requirements, to DHS in FY 23 to fund NIBVISPP.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

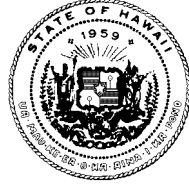
Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 1, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2437 SD1 – RELATING TO THE NEIGHBOR ISLANDS BLIND AND VISUALLY
IMPAIRED SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM.**

HEARING: March 2, 2022, 10:15 a.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent and offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require the Department of Human Services to establish a neighbor islands blind and visually impaired service pilot program that provides training and other services to blind or visually impaired individuals residing on the neighbor islands. Requires the Department of Human Services to report to Legislature before the Regular Session of 2025. Appropriates funds. Repeals 06/30/2025. (SD1) The SD1 amended the measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Department of Human Services shall work with neighbor island transportation service providers and other individuals and entities to develop a special needs transportation assistance service network to serve program participants;
- (2) Defining "neighbor island"; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The Department appreciates the SD1 amendments regarding transportation as the need for transportation for individuals with disabilities is not available consistently in every county. The DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) will collaborate with the Counties and community providers to enhance or develop a special needs transportation network for individuals who require transportation to obtain, retain, or advance employment. These services should include transportation to educational services associated with their employment goals. Notably, Medicaid provides transportation assistance for its beneficiaries to and from medical appointments.

Currently, DVR pays its clients' transportation needs associated with their employment goals. Typically, clients use public transportation, or when public transportation is not available, DVR will pay for private transportation, including air travel.

Given the one-year time frame for the pilot, DVR requests clarification on whether the pilot should focus on one county and whether the first year should be dedicated to planning and development, including planning for training and education resources for transportation providers. Alternatively, the Legislature may want to extend the pilot period, to include all counties in the discussion and planning phase. In either event, DVR would contract a consultant to work with the community and providers and require a general fund appropriation for those services; administratively, it may be more feasible to procure one consultant to facilitate planning for all counties. Once funded, the procurement will require time, and consequently, we expect that an implementation plan may take a year or more to develop. We do anticipate that a future funding request for implementation will be required. The DHS DVR will provide additional resource needs as the session continues.

DHS respectfully notes that services described in the measure are currently available to eligible participants of our Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Services for the Blind Branch, Ho`opono. A number of the services are also provided by non-profit statewide centers for independent living statewide. Additionally, assistive technology devices and training are available via the State Grant for Assistive Technology, offered through the Assistive Technology Resource Center.

DVR's Ho`opono program provides outreach and adjustment to blindness services that include: Structured Discovery™ training; peer-to-peer mentoring; individual and group counseling for the adjustment to blindness; information and referral to community resources, including consumer organizations; training in orientation and mobility, daily living, self-care, and home management skills; benefits counseling; financial assistance with vocational training and higher education; competitive, integrated employment opportunities; low vision services and more to eligible individuals in their homes and communities via the Vocational Rehabilitation program, the New Visions program, and the Independent Living for Older Individuals who are Blind Program statewide.

DVR's Ho`opono New Visions program is the only training center to hold Structured Discovery™ certification in the State of Hawaii. DVR received the certification of the National Blindness Professional Certification Board in 2008.

The proposed legislation requires that the pilot program's volunteer services shall be "... recruited, assigned, and supervised by the department of human services or an entity contracted by the department to organize and implement the pilot program." It further requires that DHS shall "... work with neighbor island transportation service providers and other individuals to develop a special needs transportation assistance service network to serve program participants." The measure would additionally require DHS to "establish procedures and requirements for accepting program participants;" and further, that DHS shall "enter into a contract with a non-profit organization to recruit, train, and supervise volunteer service corps members and to oversee the pilot program, provided that existing department personnel may be assigned to fulfill administrative and fiscal responsibilities of the support program."

To implement the measure as drafted, DHS DVR will need new positions and a general fund appropriation to perform these additional duties and maintain current responsibilities; DVR does not have available staff to dedicate to this pilot. Notably, amongst other executive budget requests, DVR's budget priority is restoring the general fund portion of salaries for 11 defunded FTE positions, six temporary and five permanent positions, that were defunded by Act 9, SLH 2020. Per budget instructions, DVR is requesting restoration of these salaries by using trade-off funds from other current expenses (OCE) to personal expenses to reinforce

ongoing high-quality service delivery. DVR requires these salaries restored to address community needs and resolve DVR's Order of Selection deferred list. Using OCE funds to restore salaries reduces general funds that would otherwise be available for client services.

Additionally, the federal funding requirements of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Services for Older Blind grants would prevent DHS staff from working on services provided to individuals who are not eligible for our programs. Consequently, the proposed measure requires new 100% state general funded positions.

The proposed legislation also requires that: “[t]he department of human services shall identify and secure other sources of funding, including federal funding, to provide for matching funds for the pilot program[.]” As mentioned above, DHS will attempt to secure such funding; however, this will likely be difficult due to existing federal funding already allocated for these services, as noted above, to serve DVR’s clients statewide.

DHS appreciates that any funds appropriated pursuant to this proposed legislation shall be in addition to and shall not reduce or supplant any portion of the base budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

SB-2437-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 2:46:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2022 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Stan Young	Testifying for Hawaii State committee of Blind Vendors	Support	No

Comments:

Good afternoon chair, vice chair, and members. I am Stan Young, Chairperson, Hawaii State Committee of Blind Vendors, fully supporting SB2437 S.D.1, and also supporting the appropriation amendment requested by NFB of Hawaii.

This is an important bill for anyone who is blind or anyone who becomes blind while living on our neighbor islands. Added to not seeing, Isolation is a major barrier. Most services for the blind are based on Oahu and not readily available to neighbor island residents. The best help with independence and self-sufficiency is tied to a job goal; fine if you are 25 but not so fine if you are 75. We should do better by our neighbor island residents.

I support the appropriations amendment proposed by NFB of Hawaii to appropriate \$25,000 for fiscal year 2022-23 to be used for program planning, not actual service delivery. I am concerned that DHS acknowledges the much more limited assistance given blind neighbor island residents but does not have a plan to address this disparity as compared to Oahu. This problem will continue without this bill, which is unacceptable to me.

Passing SB2437 S.D. 1 with an appropriation to fund planning is the best way to move this matter forward and give hope to our blind neighbor island residents. The need has been documented and reported by the committee on Human Services. Mahalo for your consideration as well.

National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii
Testimony before the Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)
Hawaii State Senate
Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session of 2022
March 2, 2022, 10:15 AM, hearing on SB2437 S.D. 1

Good morning chair, vice chair, and members. I am James Gashel, representing the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, fully supporting but also proposing an appropriations amendment to SB2437 S.D. 1 as passed by the subject matter committee.

This is an important bill for anyone who is blind or anyone who becomes blind while living on our neighbor islands. Added to not seeing, Isolation is a major barrier. Most services for the blind are based on Oahu and not readily available to neighbor island residents. The best help with independence and self-sufficiency is tied to a job goal; fine if you are 25 but not so fine if you are 75. We should do better by our neighbor island residents.

As found in the committee report, [SB2437 SD1 SSCR2088](#), "...approximately two thousand neighbor island residents who are blind or visually impaired do not have access to or are ineligible for existing state and local support services, including training, adjustments to blindness services, and transportation. The Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program to be established pursuant to this measure will supplement existing statewide services and enable these individuals to receive the necessary training and other services that would enable them to have full and integrated lives in their existing communities."

SB2437 has a blank appropriation in section 3, but the pilot program proposed in this bill will cost money. How much it will cost depends on the actual program design, largely up to the Department of Human Services in consultation with the blind themselves. Therefore, NFB of Hawaii requests an amendment to appropriate \$25,000 for fiscal year 2022-23 to be used for program planning, not actual service delivery. The amendment directs DHS to request service delivery funds in the regular budget request submitted in 2023. Specifics as to the use of funds appropriated for fiscal year 2022-23 are included in the suggested amendment language attached to this testimony.

Passing SB2437 S.D. 1, with a small program planning appropriation is the best way to move this matter forward and give hope to our blind neighbor island residents. The need has been documented and reported by the committee on Human Services. Mahalo for your consideration as well.

Proposed amendment to SB2437 S.D. 1

Amendment proposed by National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii

Purpose: to specify an appropriation amount and allowed purposes for fiscal year 2022-23

Proposed amendment to section 3 of SB2437 S.D. 1

(a) After the dollar sign insert 25,000; and

(b) after “fiscal year 2022-23,” strike the remainder of the section and insert: “to be used for planning the pilot program; provided that:

(1) The Department shall consult with membership organizations of blind persons based on the neighbor islands and establish a pilot program work group composed of neighbor island residents who are blind.

(2) The work group and the Department shall develop a written implementation plan, pilot program performance period, and a program budget to be submitted to the legislature no later than thirty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2023.

(3) The Department shall include funding for the pilot program in its regular budget request submitted in 2023; and

(4) Any funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall be in addition to and shall not supplant any portion of the base budget for any state or county agency providing services for blind or visually impaired persons.”

SB-2437-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2022 9:41:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2022 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	No

Comments:

Support.

Testimony of Leni Ebusutani
before the Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)
Hawaii State Senate
Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session of 2022
March 2, 2022, 10:15 AM, hearing on SB2437 S.D. 1

Good morning chair, vice chair, and members. I am Leni Ebusutani, fully supporting SB2437 S.D. 1, and also supporting the appropriation amendment requested by NFB of Hawaii.

This is an important bill for anyone who is blind or anyone who becomes blind while living on our neighbor islands. Added to not seeing, Isolation is a major barrier. Most services for the blind are based on Oahu and not readily available to neighbor island residents. The best help with independence and self-sufficiency is tied to a job goal; fine if you are 25 but not so fine if you are 75. We should do better by our neighbor island residents.

I support the appropriations amendment proposed by NFB of Hawaii to appropriate \$25,000 for fiscal year 2022-23 to be used for program planning, not actual service delivery. I am concerned that DHS acknowledges the much more limited assistance given blind neighbor island residents but does not have a plan to address this disparity as compared to Oahu. This problem will continue without this bill, which is unacceptable to me.

Passing SB2437 S.D. 1 with an appropriation to fund planning is the best way to move this matter forward and give hope to our blind neighbor island residents. The need has been documented and reported by the committee on Human Services. Mahalo for your consideration as well.

Brandon G. Young

Testimony of: Brandon Young
before the Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)
Hawaii State Senate
Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session of 2022
March 2, 2022, 10:15 AM, hearing on SB2437 S.D. 1

Good morning chair, vice chair, and members. I am Brandon Young, fully supporting SB2437 S.D.1, and also supporting the appropriation amendment requested by NFB of Hawaii.

This is an important bill for anyone who is blind or anyone who becomes blind while living on our neighbor islands. Added to not seeing, Isolation is a major barrier. Most services for the blind are based on Oahu and not readily available to neighbor island residents. The best help with independence and self-sufficiency is tied to a job goal; fine if you are 25 but not so fine if you are 75. We should do better by our neighbor island residents.

I support the appropriations amendment proposed by NFB of Hawaii to appropriate \$25,000 for fiscal year 2022-23 to be used for program planning, not actual service delivery. I am concerned that DHS acknowledges the much more limited assistance given blind neighbor island residents but does not have a plan to address this disparity as compared to Oahu. This problem will continue without this bill, which is unacceptable to me.

Passing SB2437 S.D. 1 with an appropriation to fund planning is the best way to move this matter forward and give hope to our blind neighbor island residents. The need has been documented and reported by the committee on Human Services. Mahalo for your consideration as well.

Testimony of Hoku Burrows
before the Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)
Hawaii State Senate
Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session of 2022
March 2, 2022, 10:15 AM, hearing on SB2437 S.D. 1

Good morning chair, vice chair, and members. My name is Hoku Burrows, a blind woman and member of the National Federation of the Blind of Hawai'i. I am fully supporting SB2437 S.D.1, and also supporting the appropriation amendment requested by NFB of Hawaii.

I support the appropriations amendment proposed by NFB of Hawaii to appropriate \$25,000 for fiscal year 2022-23 to be used for program planning, not actual service delivery. I am concerned that DHS acknowledges the much more limited assistance given blind neighbor island residents but does not have a plan to address the lack of service compared to Oahu. I am very concerned for my fellow blind Hawai'i residents and do not want to see the limited neighbor island services continue.

Speaking to you from firsthand experience. Growing up on the island of Molokai, I did not initially receive good training, and had to relocate At a young age as my disability was diagnosed with no resources available to us on Molokai, it forced me to move to Oahu away from my family while in my early twenties. My sister was not so fortunate, needing other kinds of disability services, moving away from family as a young teenager to Honolulu.

When I finally met blind mentors, members of the National Federation of the Blind, it was the turning point in my independence, self-advocacy and confidence as a blind woman. Without the mentorship of other blind people, I would not be where I am today, able to care for myself and participate fully in life and my community giving back.

Passing SB2437 S.D. 1 with an appropriation to fund planning is the best way to move this matter forward and give hope to my blind peers on the neighbor islands. The need has been documented and reported by the committee on Human Services.

Mahalo for your support by passing this important bill.

Testimony of Virgil Stinnett
before the Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)
Hawaii State Senate
Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session of 2022
March 2, 2022, 10:15 AM, hearing on SB2437 S.D. 1

Good morning chair, vice chair, and members. My name is Virgil Stinnett, elected state president of the National Federation of the Blind of Hawai'i and I am in strong support of SB2437 S.D. 1, and support the appropriation amendment requested by NFB of Hawaii.

I support the appropriations amendment proposed by NFB of Hawaii to appropriate \$25,000 for fiscal year 2022-23 to be used for program planning, not actual service delivery.

Because of my own personal experience, I am very concerned about my fellow blind Hawai'i residents and believe the next step is to address the issue with the amendment submitted by NFB of Hawai'i.

I am blind and have lived a full life as a blind person since 1996 at the age of 26. I am speaking to you from firsthand experience. I did not initially receive good training, yet had excellent blind mentors, members of the National Federation of the Blind, until I finally attended a training center with excellent blindness skills and attitude training in 2006. Without the mentorship of other blind individuals and superior training at a qualified center, my life would not be as blessed and full as it has become. I am a Hawai'i based entrepreneur serving our Department of Defense for over 16 years. This would not be so without the opportunity and mentoring given to me early on when i became blind. I am committed to ensuring this is an opportunity for other blind and low vision individuals in our state.

Mahalo for your support and consideration by moving this critical bill forward.

Testimony of Katie Keim
before the Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)
Hawaii State Senate
Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session of 2022
March 2, 2022, 10:15 AM, hearing on SB2437 S.D. 1

Good morning chair, vice chair, and members. My name is Katie Keim, an elected leader and member of the National Federation of the Blind of Hawai'i. I am in full support of SB2437 S.D. 1, and support the appropriation amendment requested by NFB of Hawaii.

I support the appropriations amendment proposed by NFB of Hawaii to appropriate \$25,000 for fiscal year 2022-23 to be used for program planning, not actual service delivery. I am greatly concerned that without this bill, my neighbor island peers will lose out on the opportunities needed to live successful independent lives regardless of their age and ability to move to Oahu for employment training, which is most unlikely when you are in school at 14 years old living at home or 70 years old and now blind in retirement.

I became blind 27 years ago at the age of 36 and have been personally blessed to have received superior blindness related training, but know and have known so many others who have not had the same opportunity. It is time we bring a more robust program with opportunity to our blind neighbor island residents. Long distance mentoring helps but does not replace first hand training. Blindness need not be a barrier to living a full and productive life regardless of your age or location of residence. It is my hope it will be the experience of my fellow blind peers throughout Hawai'i.

Passing SB2437 S.D. 1 with an appropriation to fund planning is the best way to move this matter forward and give hope to our blind neighbor island residents. The need has been documented and reported by the committee on Human Services.

Mahalo for your consideration and support by moving this very important bill forward.

SB-2437-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2022 8:58:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2022 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Donald Sakamoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Good morning chair, vice chair, and members. I am Donald Sakamoto, fully supporting SB2437 S.D.1, and also supporting the appropriation amendment requested by the NFB of Hawaii.

This is a very important bill for anyone who is blind or anyone who becomes blind while living on our neighbor islands. Added to not seeing, Isolation is quite a major barrier, and most services for the blind are based on the island of Oahu and not readily available to the neighbor island residents. The best help with independence and self-sufficiency is tied to a job goal; and it is fine if you are 20 but not so fine if you are 60 years old. We should definitely do much better by our neighbor island residents.

I support the appropriations amendment proposed by the NFB of Hawaii to appropriate the \$25,000 for fiscal year 2022-2023 to be used for the program planning, not the actual service delivery. I have some concerns that DHS acknowledges the much more limited assistance given to our blind neighbor island residents however, doesn't quite have a plan to address this disparity as compared to the island of Oahu. This problem will probably continue without this bill, which is unacceptable to not only to me, but perhaps others too.

Passing SB2437 S.D. 1 with an appropriation to fund planning is surely the best way to "GO For Broke" and move this matter forward and give the hope to our blind neighbor island residents!

Testimony of Jaclyn Leilani Borsa
before the Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)
Hawaii State Senate
Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session of 2022
March 2, 2022, 10:15 AM, hearing on SB2437 S.D. 1

Good morning chair, vice chair, and members. I am Jaclyn Borsa, fully supporting SB2437 S.D.1, and also supporting the appropriation amendment requested by NFB of Hawaii.

This is an important bill for anyone who is blind or anyone who becomes blind while living on our neighbor islands. Added to not seeing, Isolation is a major barrier. Most services for the blind are based on Oahu and not readily available to neighbor island residents. The best help with independence and self-sufficiency. Independence is very important to taking control of your life.

I support the appropriations amendment proposed by NFB of Hawaii to appropriate \$25,000 for fiscal year 2022-23 to be used for program planning, not actual service delivery. I am concerned that DHS acknowledges the much more limited assistance given blind neighbor island residents but does not have a plan to address this disparity as compared to Oahu. This problem will continue without this bill, which is unacceptable to me.

Passing SB2437 S.D. 1 with an appropriation to fund planning is the best way to move this matter forward and give hope to our blind neighbor island residents. The need has been documented and reported by the committee on Human Services. Mahalo for your consideration as well.