

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 2, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2049 - RELATING TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**

HEARING: Tuesday, February 2, 2010 1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a Vocational Rehabilitation Division within the Department of Human Services (DHS) and proposes to place services for blind persons and deaf services under this division. This bill will also require DHS to develop a strategic plan to restructure services to deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind persons through a comprehensive service center.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services respectfully opposes this bill.

A Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division (VRBSD) is already established in DHS. VRBSD provides services to qualified persons with disabilities including blind, deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind persons.

Further, this bill poses a separation of powers issue because the establishment of a division within a department is an executive function, not a legislative function. HRS 26-38 allows the

head of a department, with the approval of the Governor, to establish or abolish any division or administrative unit.

The Legislative Reference Bureau has completed a report on Vocational Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing through a Comprehensive Service Center (Report No. 1, 2009). The Findings and Recommendations include VRSBD working with recognized authorities to develop a plan for restructuring the Deaf Services Section of VR as part of a comprehensive center (page 24). VRSBD has committed a one-time expenditure of American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds of \$200,000 toward this effort and there is no on-going funding available.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to this Committee.

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January 26, 2010

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

DATE: Thursday, February 2, 2010
TIME: 1:30pm
Conference Room 016 State Capitol
RE: SB 2049 RELATING TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION.


Good Morning Senator Chun-Oakland and Senator Ihara and members
of the Committee on Human Services:

My name is Gretchen Lawson. I am the President/CEO for
the Arc of Kona, a private, charitable, not-for profit
organization supporting people with disabilities on the big
island. I am in favor of SB 2049 establishing a vocational
rehabilitation division within the department of human
services. This in effect shortens the title of the present
division and then places services for blind persons and deaf
services under the vocational rehabilitation division. Further,
this bill will clarify services for the deaf and requires the
department of human services to develop a strategic plan
to restructure services to the deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-
blind through a comprehensive service center.

The measure contains some important distinctions for
services and provides for better understanding of its mission to
those people living with all types of disability.

Thank you for approving the bill in committee.

Sincerely,

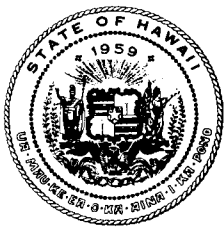

Gretchen Lawson
President/CEO

United Way
carf
Commission on Accreditation
of Rehabilitation Facilities

The
ARC of Kona

www.arcofkona.org

"Expanding the Possibilities"
"Ho'o Nui Ka Hiki"



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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February 2, 2010

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senate Bill 2049 - Relating to Vocational Rehabilitation

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports the intent of Senate Bill 2049 that establishes the Vocational Rehabilitation Division within the Department of Human Services (DHS), clarifies services for participants who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind, and requires DHS to develop a strategic plan to provide services to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind through a comprehensive service center.

DCAB supports the amendment in Section 1 regarding establishment of vocational rehabilitation within the Department of Human Services on page 1, line 3 – 6. The reference to Chapter 348F on page 1, line 9 is incorrect. Chapter 348F is a reference to the Disability and Communication Access Board, and not to Vocational Rehabilitation. That reference should be amended to read Chapter “348.”

Currently, there is a committee under DHS’ Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board (DHHAB) that is working on plans for the comprehensive deaf center (CDC). There are representatives on the committee from the deaf and hard of hearing community, Kapiolani Deaf Center (which is the Gallaudet University Regional Center) and DCAB. Since planning is already underway, section 2 of the bill is unnecessary and we suggest deleting it.

Section 3 of the bill requires DHS to submit a legislative report presenting the results of the strategic plan for the comprehensive service center. We recommend that DHS submit a report to the 2011 Legislature based on the work of DHHAB’s CDC Planning Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES W. FLEMING
Chairperson

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director



FRANCINE MAE AONA KENYON

2520 Jasmine Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816
archerygal001@gmail.com

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at 1:30 PM in Conference Room 016

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HMS AND WAYS AND MEAN

SENATE BILL 2049 – RELATING TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

My name is Francine Aona Kenyon and am a deaf advocate with many hats. Along with Art Frank as the chair of DHHAB, I am the vice-chair of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Advisory Board (DHHAB). I also was appointed to chair the DHHAB Comprehensive Deaf Center (DHHAB CDC) Planning Committee.

I support the intent of Senate Bill 2049, Relating to Vocational Rehabilitation that (1) establishes a vocational rehabilitation division within the department of human services, (2) places services for blind persons and deaf services under the vocational rehabilitation division, (3) clarifies services for the deaf, (4) requires the department of human services to develop a strategic plan to restructure services to the deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind through a comprehensive service center because Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind consumers really need more services and programs in the State of Hawaii.

Though, the Vocational Rehabilitation Division is already established within the Department of Human Services, I strongly support the amendments on Section 1. On Section 1 (a), line 15 to 17, it states about "services for deaf persons" which means development and monitoring of vocational rehabilitation services for persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind. I definitely support that paragraph, verifying that DHHAB makes recommendations on the development and monitoring of vocational rehabilitation services for persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing to the Vocational Rehabilitation Division since its inception around in 1970's. There once was the State Council on Deaf-Blindness but now is inactive.

Per Section 2 of the bill, the DHHAB CDC Planning Committee is currently working on the strategy plan for the comprehensive deaf center with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within the Department of Human Services. The committee is consisted of (1) members representing various agencies such as Kapiolani Deaf Center/Gallaudet University Regional Center (GURC), Disability and Communications Access Board (DCAB), Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind (HSDB), Hawaii Center on Independent Living (HCIL), Aloha State Association of the Deaf (ASAD), Ohana Kuli Ano Kokua (OKAK – hard-of-hearing); (2) Deaf and hard-of-hearing members representing Oahu, Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai; and, (3) parents of deaf children. The general Deaf and hard-of-hearing community are also included in the strategy planning of the CDC. Therefore, Section 2(b) requirements may be an excellent tool for us in the strategy plan.

I firmly support for DHS to submit a legislative report to present the results of the strategic plan for the comprehensive service center, including the progress of the DHHAB CDC Planning Committee under the Vocational Rehabilitation Division.

Thank you for the opportunity for me to testify on behalf of the Deaf community.

Sincerely,

Francine Aona Kenyon
Deaf Advocate

ART FRANK
86-363 KAWILI ST
WAIANAE, HI 96792-2941
JANUARY 29, 2010

S.B. NO. 2049 RELATING TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Good afternoon Madame Chair and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services. My name is ART FRANK and I am the Chair of the DEAF HARD OF HEARING ADVISORY BOARD (DHHAB), for VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION, DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES.

I want to thank this committee, particularly it's Chair for amending Section 348-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes to include rehabilitation services for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind. I definitely support this change because it's inclusive and long time in coming. Mahalo nui loa for your support.



ART FRANK
CHAIR, DEAF HARD OF HEARING ADVISORY BOARD