

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

822

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 03 2017

RE: S.B. No. 535
S.D. 2

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2017
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred S.B. No. 535, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO HEARING AIDS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to require health insurers in the State to provide a minimum benefit of \$1,500 for a reasonably medically necessary hearing aid per hearing-impaired ear every thirty-six months.

The Disability and Communication Access Board; The Georgia E. Morikawa Center; Isle Interpret, LLC; National Active and Retired Federal Employees; and three individuals submitted written comments in support of the measure.

The Insurance Division of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund; Hawaii Medical Service Association; and Kaiser Permanente Hawaii submitted written comments on the measure.

Your Committee finds that, according to the National Institutes of Health, about one-third of Americans between the ages of sixty-five and seventy-five and about one-half of those older than seventy-five have some degree of hearing loss. Your Committee also finds that approximately three to four out of every



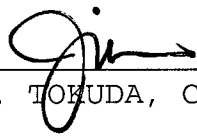
one thousand children born in Hawaii are identified as having permanent hearing loss.

Your Committee acknowledges that Hawaii's Medicaid managed care plans cover hearing aid evaluation, selection, purchase, and fitting every three years, and subsequent hearing aid checks, hearing testing, ear molds, repairs, and batteries. However, current federal Medicare insurance plans for the elderly only cover hearing testing and do not cover hearing aid purchases and related services. Therefore, your Committee believes it is appropriate to require health insurance coverage for hearing aids for individuals with all types of hearing loss and to specify a minimum amount of coverage and frequency for replacement of hearing aids under the coverage.

Your Committee has amended this measure by changing its effective date to June 1, 2050, to facilitate further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Ways and Means that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 535, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 535, S.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Ways and Means,

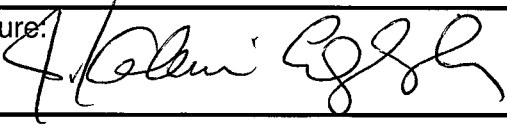


JILL N. TOKUDA, Chair



The Senate
Twenty-Ninth Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Ways and Means
WAM

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|--|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------|
| Bill / Resolution No.:* | Committee Referral: | Date: | | |
| SB 535, SPD | CPH, WAM | 23 Feb 2017 | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____ | | | | |
| The Recommendation is: | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313 | | | | |
| Members | Aye | Aye (WR) | Nay | Excused |
| TOKUDA, Jill N. (C) | ✓ | | | |
| DELA CRUZ, Donovan M. (VC) | | | | ✓ |
| ENGLISH, J. Kalani | / | | | |
| GALUTERIA, Brickwood | / | | | |
| HARIMOTO, Breene | / | | | |
| INOUYE, Lorraine R. | | | | / |
| KAHELE, Kaiali'i | | | | / |
| RIVIERE, Gil | / | | | |
| SHIMABUKURO, Maile S.L. | | | | / |
| TANIGUCHI, Brian T. | | | | / |
| WAKAI, Glenn | / | | | |
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| TOTAL | 6 | | | 5 |
| Recommendation: | | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted | | | | |
| Chair's or Designee's Signature:  | | | | |
| Distribution: | | | | |
| Original | Yellow | Pink | Goldenrod | |
| File with Committee Report | Clerk's Office | Drafting Agency | Committee File Copy | |

*Only one measure per Record of Votes