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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO CONVENE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE HAWAII LEGAL AID INTERAGENCY ROUNDTABLE TO BETTER SERVE LOW-INCOME, VULNERABLE, AND AT-RISK POPULATIONS AND INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE.

1           WHEREAS, the Department of Human Services is responsible  
2 for providing essential human services and protecting the health  
3 and well-being of all of Hawaii's residents, especially those  
4 who are least able to help themselves; and

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6           WHEREAS, the Department of the Attorney General is  
7 responsible for providing public services and legal support to  
8 the State, its departments, and agencies; and

9  
10          WHEREAS, many Hawaii residents face gaps in the  
11 availability of legal aid - including legal representation,  
12 advice, community education, and self-help and technology tools  
13 - especially those who are most vulnerable and underserved; and

14  
15          WHEREAS, the 2007 *Assessment of Civil Legal Needs and*  
16 *Barriers of Low- and Moderate-Income People in Hawaii* found that  
17 only one in five people have their civil legal needs addressed  
18 and that only one in three people who contacted a civil legal  
19 service provider were able to get assistance; and

20  
21          WHEREAS, there is only one legal services attorney for  
22 every 2,291 persons living below 125 percent of the federal  
23 poverty level and only one attorney for every 4,402 persons  
24 living below 200 percent of the poverty level; and



## H.C.R. NO. 141

1 WHEREAS, significant barriers to obtaining legal assistance  
2 exist in Hawaii including, in addition to the inability to  
3 afford an attorney, language and cultural barriers, lack of  
4 knowledge of one's rights or the availability of services, and  
5 difficulty in accessing legal services programs; and

6  
7 WHEREAS, equal access to justice helps individuals and  
8 families receive health services, housing, education, and  
9 employment; enhances family stability and public safety; and  
10 secures the public's faith in the justice system; and

11  
12 WHEREAS, guaranteeing access to legal solutions improves  
13 outcomes for those seeking assistance and results in cost  
14 savings to the State in the long term by preventing or reducing  
15 problems like homelessness, poverty, and health issues that can  
16 be costly and harmful to individuals and the public; and

17  
18 WHEREAS, the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States  
19 Constitution ensures equal justice under the law and no state  
20 shall "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal  
21 protection of the laws"; and

22  
23 WHEREAS, goal sixteen of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda  
24 for Sustainable Development is to promote just, peaceful, and  
25 inclusive societies that provide access to justice for all and  
26 build effective and accountable institutions at all levels; and

27  
28 WHEREAS, a roundtable allows different stakeholders to come  
29 to the table to exchange ideas and information, plan, and  
30 coordinate, which allows programs to be more efficient and  
31 produce better outcomes; now, therefore,

32  
33 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
34 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
35 of 2018, the Senate concurring, that the State of Hawaii  
36 Department of Human Services and the Department of the Attorney  
37 General are urged to convene the Hawaii Legal Aid Interagency  
38 Roundtable (Roundtable); and

39  
40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human  
41 Services and the Department of the Attorney General are urged to  
42 participate, and the Attorney General and the Director of Human



# H.C.R. NO. 141

1 Services, or their designees, are urged to serve as co-chairs of  
2 the Roundtable; and

3  
4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Roundtable is requested to  
5 submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature on  
6 its success in achieving its mission no later than 20 days prior  
7 to the convening of each regular session; and

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Roundtable is requested to  
10 submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature on the  
11 economic impact of funding access to civil legal services no  
12 later than January 1, 2020; and

13  
14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that representatives from the  
15 following government agencies are urged to participate in the  
16 Roundtable:

- 17  
18 (1) The Department of Health;  
19  
20 (2) The Executive Office on Aging;  
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22 (3) The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs;  
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24 (4) The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations;  
25  
26 (5) The Office of Community Services;  
27  
28 (6) The Hawaii Public Housing Authority;  
29  
30 (7) The Hawaii Civil Rights Commission;  
31  
32 (8) The Office of Hawaiian Affairs;  
33  
34 (9) The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands;  
35  
36 (10) The Department of Public Safety; and  
37  
38 (11) Any other government agency the co-chairs may, from  
39 time to time, designate; and

40  
41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the co-chairs may invite the  
42 participation of the Judiciary, Access to Justice Commission,



# H.C.R. NO. 141

1 and Hawaii Consortium of Legal Service Providers to the extent  
2 consistent with law and legal obligations; and

3  
4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
5 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Attorney  
6 General, Director of Human Services, Director of Health,  
7 Director of the Executive Office on Aging, Director of Commerce  
8 and Consumer Affairs, Director of Labor and Industrial  
9 Relations, Executive Director of the Office of Community  
10 Services, Executive Director of the Hawaii Public Housing  
11 Authority, Executive Director of the Hawaii Civil Rights  
12 Commission, Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Hawaiian  
13 Affairs, Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission, and the  
14 Director of Public Safety.

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OFFERED BY: Debra A. Seltzer

Linda Lehman

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Guthrie Thibodeau

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Melanie K. Parker

L. N. S.

MAR - 9 2018

