

JAN 25 2021

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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A  
PROGRAM TO RECRUIT AND EMPLOY QUALIFIED BLIND PERSONS TO  
SERVE AS ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY INSTRUCTORS AND IN OTHER  
POSITIONS AS TEACHERS OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS.

1 WHEREAS, the National Orientation and Mobility  
2 Certification (NOMC) is a credentialing process administered by  
3 the National Blindness Professional Certification Board and  
4 includes training in teaching Structured Discovery Cane Travel;  
5 and  
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7 WHEREAS, for decades, Structured Discovery Cane Travel has  
8 been empowering blind children and adults across the United  
9 States, helping them build confidence and feelings of self-  
10 respect as they move safely from place to place; and  
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12 WHEREAS, the methods and principles of Structured Discovery  
13 Cane Travel come from the lived experiences of blind men and  
14 women who have shared their experiences, attitudes and  
15 techniques with each other since 1940, leading to techniques,  
16 problem solving strategies, experiential learning, confidence  
17 building experiences, and the role modeling of non-visual  
18 techniques, which demonstrate their effectiveness while  
19 correcting misconceptions about blindness; and  
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21 WHEREAS, for the teaching of orientation and mobility, the  
22 Department of Education (DOE) has no employees who hold the NOMC  
23 credential and until recently would only accept the Certified  
24 Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) certification from  
25 the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and  
26 Education Professionals. The COMS certification gives the DOE  
27 the personnel resources to provide vision-centered orientation  
28 and mobility services but not personnel qualified or capable to  
29 teach the structured discovery approach; and  
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1 WHEREAS, of the two recognized training methods, adherents  
2 to the structured discovery approach emphasize employing blind  
3 instructors, while adherents to the vision-centered approach  
4 emphasize instructors who can see, resulting in diminished  
5 employment opportunities for qualified blind persons; and  
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7 WHEREAS, although the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board now  
8 accepts the NOMC orientation and mobility credential to serve in  
9 other positions for which they are qualified to teach visually  
10 impaired students, this change has not resulted in more reliance  
11 on blind instructors to teach; now, therefore,  
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13 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
14 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, the  
15 House of Representatives concurring, that the DOE is urged to  
16 develop and implement an affirmative action program, to the  
17 extent permitted by law, designed to recruit and employ  
18 qualified blind professionals to serve as orientation and  
19 mobility instructors and in other positions as teachers of  
20 visually impaired students; and  
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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of the  
23 Department of Education is urged to submit a report of its  
24 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
25 legislation, to this body at least thirty days prior to the  
26 convening of the Regular Session of 2022, indicating the steps  
27 taken and progress made to recruit and employ blind people in  
28 instructional positions with the Department of Education for  
29 which they are qualified; and  
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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
32 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Lieutenant  
33 Governor, Chairperson of the Board of Education, Superintendent  
34 of the Department of Education, Chairperson of the Hawaii  
35 Teacher Standards Board, Administrator of the Department of  
36 Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
37 for the Blind Branch (Ho'opono), President of the National  
38 Blindness Professional Certification Board, President of the  
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1 National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, and President of the  
2 Hawaii Association of the Blind.

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OFFERED BY:

*Karl Rhoads*

