

JAN 25 2021

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## SENATE RESOLUTION

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

11  
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

20  
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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31           WHEREAS, of the two recognized training methods, adherents  
32 to the structured discovery approach emphasize employing blind



# S.R. NO. 6

1 instructors, while adherents to the vision-centered approach  
2 emphasize instructors who can see, resulting in diminished  
3 employment opportunities for qualified blind persons; and  
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5 WHEREAS, although the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board now  
6 accepts the NOMC orientation and mobility credential to serve in  
7 other positions for which they are qualified to teach visually  
8 impaired students, this change has not resulted in more reliance  
9 on blind instructors to teach; now, therefore,  
10

11 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
12 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021,  
13 that the DOE is urged to develop and implement an affirmative  
14 action program, to the extent permitted by law, designed to  
15 recruit and employ qualified blind professionals to serve as  
16 orientation and mobility instructors and in other positions as  
17 teachers of visually impaired students; and  
18

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of the  
20 Department of Education is urged to submit a report of its  
21 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
22 legislation, to this body at least thirty days prior to the  
23 convening of the Regular Session of 2022, indicating the steps  
24 taken and progress made to recruit and employ blind people in  
25 instructional positions with the Department of Education for  
26 which they are qualified; and  
27

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
29 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor,  
30 Chairperson of the Board of Education, Superintendent of the  
31 Department of Education, Chairperson of the Hawaii Teacher  
32 Standards Board, Administrator of the Department of Human  
33 Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services for the  
34 Blind Branch (Ho'opono), President of the National Blindness  
35 Professional Certification Board, President of the  
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# S.R. NO. 6

1 National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, and President of the  
2 Hawaii Association of the Blind.

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OFFERED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

