
HOUSE RESOLUTION

COMMITTING TO PROVIDE GREATER PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE LEGISLATIVE
PROCESS BY ADOPTING RULES TO ALLOW FOR VIRTUAL TESTIMONY,
RECORDED HEARINGS, AND INTERNET BROADCASTS OF HEARINGS
BEYOND PERIODS OF CATASTROPHIC EVENTS.

1 WHEREAS, public access to the Legislature and the
2 legislative process allows for citizens of Hawaii to actively
3 engage in decisions impacting their everyday life; and
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5 WHEREAS, the Legislature has committed to providing greater
6 public access for citizens interested in the legislative
7 process, beginning with Act 331, Session Laws of Hawaii 1989, to
8 improve public access to legislative information; and
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10 WHEREAS, Hawaii's unique geography as an archipelago of
11 islands poses significant challenges for residents from the
12 counties of Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii to actively participate due
13 to costly, time-consuming travel to attend hearings, and to
14 provide in-person, oral testimony; and
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16 WHEREAS, the lack of remote hearing and testimony
17 procedures impacts approximately four hundred thousand residents
18 in the State; and
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20 WHEREAS, the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)
21 pandemic has created great challenges to all individuals
22 interested in participating in the legislative process; and
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24 WHEREAS, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, physical
25 access to the Capitol building, hearings, and live testimony was
26 restricted due to social distancing guidelines; and
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28 WHEREAS, during the emergency stay-at-home orders and
29 travel restrictions, legislators, staff, and members of the
30 public could not attend public meetings in person; and
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1 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the implementation of
2 emergency measures suspending certain requirements of the
3 State's sunshine law in order to allow boards and commissions to
4 continue meeting and conduct necessary business while protecting
5 participants' health and safety and expanding public access to
6 meetings throughout the State; and
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8 WHEREAS, remote meetings can connect people in different
9 physical locations through the use of interactive conference
10 technology and thus enable enhanced legislative and public
11 participation; and
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13 WHEREAS, remote meetings can be safely held and allow more
14 people from different islands or parts of islands to effectively
15 participate, often during times when they would not otherwise be
16 physically able or authorized to leave their work, homes, or
17 schools to participate in an in-person meeting; and
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19 WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, remote meetings
20 helped to prevent the spread of disease, and even when there is
21 no pandemic, remote meetings can be a way to protect the health
22 and safety of participants; and
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24 WHEREAS, remote meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic also
25 allowed the elderly and individuals who have disabilities or
26 medical conditions that would place them at greater risks during
27 travel or attendance at in-person public meetings to participate
28 in the legislative process; and
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30 WHEREAS, in 2021, each house of the Legislature adopted
31 rules on remote hearings and testimony that allowed members of
32 the public to continue participation through virtual
33 conferencing platforms; and
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35 WHEREAS, the successful utilization of virtual attendance
36 and remote testimony procedures during the ongoing COVID-19
37 pandemic supports the continuation of pandemic-era rules to
38 allow for greater public access to the legislative process; now,
39 therefore,
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1 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
2 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
3 of 2022, that this body is committed to providing greater public
4 access to the legislative process by adopting rules to allow
5 virtual testimony, recorded hearings, and internet broadcasts of
6 hearings beyond periods of catastrophic events.

