

JAN 21 2022

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LEGISLATIVE ACCESS THROUGH REMOTE TESTIMONY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that temporary
2 arrangements implemented due to the coronavirus disease 2019
3 (COVID-19) pandemic have led to vastly expended public access to
4 the legislative process through the use of technology that
5 allows for remote participation in legislative hearings. In the
6 past, Hawai'i's unique geography posed particular challenges for
7 residents of the counties of Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Maui, which
8 made participation in the state legislative process time-
9 consuming and costly. In addition, demands on the time of
10 residents of all islands, such as work and family obligations,
11 made travel to the state capitol to testify at a legislative
12 proceeding difficult. The lack of remote access also
13 disenfranchised persons with disabilities who live on all
14 islands.

15 The legislature concludes that the emergence of COVID-19
16 and temporary rules that enabled the public to participate via
17 live, real-time remote testimony should be made permanent. The



1 legislature recognizes that Alaska, Nebraska, Nevada, and
2 Washington have successful remote testimony programs, and Hawai'i
3 can join these states by establishing permanent rules.

4 The purpose of this Act is to require each house of the
5 legislature to establish, through its rules, procedures and
6 necessary information infrastructure for the public to present
7 remote testimony at legislative committee hearings.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 21, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
9 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
10 read as follows:

11 "§21- Remote testimony; rules. (a) Each house of the
12 legislature shall establish, by rule:

13 (1) Procedures that enable the legislature to use remote
14 testimony at legislative committee hearings;

15 (2) Procedures that enable the public to present oral
16 testimony at legislative committee hearings through
17 remote testimony; and

18 (3) Procedures to accommodate persons with disabilities
19 through remote testimony.

20 (b) As used in this section, "remote testimony" means the
21 use of video conferencing or other technology that facilitates



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1 interaction between the public and members of the legislature
2 and enables the public to submit oral testimony remotely via the
3 Internet or other telecommunications technology during
4 legislative hearings and proceedings."

5 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY: 



S.B. NO. 2436

Report Title:

State Legislature; Legislative Access; Remote Legislative Committee Hearings; Remote Testimony; Deaf and Blind Task Force

Description:

Requires each house of the legislature to establish by its rule, procedures that enables the legislature to use remote testimony at legislative committee hearings, enable the public to present oral testimony at legislative committee hearings through remote testimony, and accommodate persons with disabilities through remote testimony. Defines "remote testimony".

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