

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1325

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 23 2023

RE: H.B. No. 870
H.D. 2
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred H.B. No. 870, H.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE NEIGHBOR ISLANDS BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Department of Human Services to:
 - (A) Establish a Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program that supplements existing statewide services by providing training and other services to neighbor island residents who are blind or visually impaired;
 - (B) Establish a Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program Working Group to develop a pilot program implementation plan and submit the plan to the Legislature before the Regular Session of 2024; and
 - (C) Submit a report on the Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program to the Legislature before the Regular Session of 2027; and



- (2) Appropriate funds for the establishment and operation of the pilot program and working group.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Disability and Communication Access Board, National Organization of Parents of Blind Children, National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, State Committee of Blind Vendors, and ten individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services.

Your Committee finds that approximately two thousand neighbor island residents who are blind or visually impaired do not have access to or are ineligible for existing state and local support services, including training, adjustments to blindness services, and transportation. The Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program to be established pursuant to this measure will supplement existing statewide services and enable these individuals to receive the necessary training and other services to improve their quality of life and independence and enable them to have full and integrated lives in their communities.

Your Committee notes that although this measure contains an unspecified appropriation amount, should your Committee on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committee respectfully requests that it consider appropriating to the Department of Human Services \$100,000 to contract services for a facilitator to convene the working group and for pilot program planning efforts, and \$93,000 to establish a 1.0 full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position within the Department of Human Services to oversee the contract and pilot program.

Your Committee further acknowledges the testimony of the Department of Human Services requesting that the establishment of the Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program pursuant this measure take effect at least six months to a year from this measure's enactment to give the Department sufficient time to work with the community to determine the scope of the pilot program and develop an appropriate budget. Your Committee finds that this request merits consideration and requests that it be further examined by your Committee on Ways and Means.



Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Amending section 1 to clarify its purposes;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of June 30, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 870, H.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 870, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



