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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS.

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

1           SECTION 1. Section 26-9, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended to read as follows:

3           "**§26-9 Department of commerce and consumer affairs.** (a)  
4 The department of commerce and consumer affairs shall be headed  
5 by a single executive to be known as the director of commerce  
6 and consumer affairs.

7           (b) The department shall protect the interests of  
8 consumers, depositors, and investors throughout the State. It  
9 shall set standards and enforce all laws and rules governing the  
10 licensing and operation of, and register and supervise the  
11 conduct of, trades, businesses, and professions, including  
12 banks, insurance companies, brokerage firms, and other financial  
13 institutions.

14           (c) The board of acupuncture, board of public accountancy,  
15 board of barbering and cosmetology, boxing commission, Hawaii  
16 board of chiropractic, contractors license board, board of  
17 dentistry, board of electricians and plumbers, elevator



1 mechanics licensing board, board of professional engineers,  
2 architects, surveyors, and landscape architects, board of  
3 massage therapy, Hawaii medical board, motor vehicle industry  
4 licensing board, motor vehicle repair industry board, board of  
5 naturopathic medicine, board of nursing, Hawaii board of  
6 optometry, pest control board, board of pharmacy, board of  
7 physical therapy, board of psychology, board of private  
8 detectives and guards, real estate commission, Hawaii board of  
9 veterinary medicine, board of speech pathology and audiology,  
10 and any board, commission, program, or entity created pursuant  
11 to or specified by statute in furtherance of the purpose of this  
12 section including but not limited to section 26H-4, or chapters  
13 484, 514B, and 514E shall be placed within the department of  
14 commerce and consumer affairs for administrative purposes.

15       The public utilities commission shall be placed, for  
16 administrative purposes only, within the department of commerce  
17 and consumer affairs. Notwithstanding section 26-9(e), (f),  
18 (g), (h), (j), (k), (l), (m), (n), (p), (q), (r), and (s), and  
19 except as permitted by sections 269-2 and 269-3, the department  
20 of commerce and consumer affairs shall not direct or exert



1 authority over the day-to-day operations or functions of the  
2 commission.

3 (d) Except as otherwise provided by this chapter, the  
4 functions, duties, and powers, subject to the administrative  
5 control of the director of commerce and consumer affairs, and  
6 the composition of each board and commission shall be as  
7 provided by law.

8 (e) Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the  
9 employment, appointment, promotion, transfer, demotion,  
10 discharge, and job descriptions of all officers and employees  
11 under the administrative control of this department shall be  
12 determined by the director of commerce and consumer affairs  
13 subject only to applicable personnel laws.

14 (f) The director of commerce and consumer affairs may  
15 appoint a hearings officer or officers not subject to chapter 76  
16 to hear and decide any case or controversy regarding licenses  
17 and the application and enforcement of rules involving any of  
18 the boards, commissions, or regulatory programs within the  
19 department of commerce and consumer affairs. The hearings  
20 officer or officers shall have power to issue subpoenas,  
21 administer oaths, hear testimony, find facts, and make



1 conclusions of law and a recommended decision; provided that the  
2 conclusions and decisions shall be subject to review and  
3 redetermination by the officer, board, or commission which would  
4 have heard the case in the first instance in the absence of a  
5 hearings officer. The review shall be conducted in accordance  
6 with chapter 91.

7 (g) The director of commerce and consumer affairs may  
8 appoint an information officer not subject to chapter 76 who  
9 shall ensure the prompt and efficient handling of consumer  
10 inquiries and the development of a strong consumer education  
11 program.

12 (h) The director may appoint a complaints and enforcement  
13 officer not subject to chapter 76 who shall facilitate the  
14 receipt, arbitration, investigation, prosecution, and hearing of  
15 complaints regarding any person who furnishes commodities,  
16 services, or real estate for which a license, registration, or  
17 certificate is required from the department or any board,  
18 commission, or regulatory program thereunder. In representing  
19 the State in bringing any action to enjoin unlicensed,  
20 unregistered, or uncertified activities, the department of  
21 commerce and consumer affairs' attorneys shall be empowered to



1 exercise all authority granted to the attorney general and to  
2 the director of the office of consumer protection under sections  
3 [~~487-12, 487-14,~~] 480-3.1, 480-15, 480-15.1, 480-20(c), [~~and~~]  
4 480-22, 487-12, and 487-14, as these sections now exist and as  
5 they subsequently may be amended. The attorneys also shall be  
6 empowered to exercise all authority granted to the attorney  
7 general and to the responsible attorneys of the various counties  
8 under section 92F-13 in all cases involving documents and  
9 records within the custody or control of the regulated  
10 industries complaints office.

11 (i) The functions and authority previously exercised by  
12 the treasurer (except funds custody, cash management, debt  
13 management, and administering of veterans loans transferred to  
14 the department of budget and finance) as constituted are  
15 transferred to the department of commerce and consumer affairs  
16 established by this chapter.

17 (j) In the course of an investigation of matters affecting  
18 the interest of consumers, depositors, or investors, or of any  
19 other matter within the jurisdiction of the department, the  
20 director shall have the power to subpoena witnesses, examine  
21 witnesses under oath, and require the production of books,



1 papers, documents, or objects that the director deems relevant  
2 or material to the inquiry. Upon application by the director,  
3 obedience to the subpoena may be enforced by the circuit court  
4 in the county in which the person subpoenaed resides or is found  
5 in the same manner as a subpoena issued by the clerk of a  
6 circuit court.

7 The director shall appoint and commission one or more  
8 investigators as the exigencies of the public service may  
9 require. Persons appointed and commissioned under this section  
10 may serve subpoenas and serve process and orders pursuant to  
11 section 634-21. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed  
12 to entitle persons appointed and commissioned by the director to  
13 retirement benefits applicable to police officers under chapter  
14 88.

15 (k) The director may adopt, amend, or repeal rules  
16 pursuant to chapter 91 to effectuate the purposes of all laws  
17 within the jurisdiction of the department of commerce and  
18 consumer affairs. The director's authority to adopt rules shall  
19 not modify, impair, or otherwise affect the power of boards and  
20 commissions placed within the department of commerce and  
21 consumer affairs for administrative purposes from adopting,



1 amending, or repealing rules, except as provided for in  
2 subsection (1).

3 (1) Any law to the contrary notwithstanding, the director  
4 of commerce and consumer affairs may:

5 (1) Establish, increase, decrease, or repeal fees relating  
6 to any aspect of the registration, certification,  
7 licensure, or any other administrative process for all  
8 laws within the jurisdiction of the department.

9 Amendments to fee assessments shall be made pursuant  
10 to chapter 91;

11 (2) Assess fees for copies in any form of media of the  
12 computerized records of the business registration  
13 division or for electronic access to the computerized  
14 information on a one-time or on-going basis. The fees  
15 charged for the copies or access may include billing  
16 service fees, network usage fees, and computer  
17 consultant fees. In adopting these fees, the director  
18 shall take into account the intent to make the  
19 division self-supporting. To this end, the fees may  
20 reflect the commercial value of the service or  
21 information provided. In the case of requests for



1 records by a nonprofit organization, the director may  
2 reduce or waive the fees. This paragraph shall  
3 control in any instance where there is a conflict  
4 between this paragraph and any other statute; and

- 5 (3) Assess fees for copies of consumer and business  
6 educational publications prepared or issued by the  
7 department. Fees collected under this paragraph shall  
8 be deposited into the compliance resolution fund under  
9 subsection (o). In the case of requests for copies by  
10 a nonprofit organization, the director may reduce or  
11 waive the fees. For purposes of this paragraph,  
12 "consumer and business educational publications" does  
13 not include copies of statutes or administrative  
14 rules.

15 The fees collected by the professional and vocational  
16 licensing division and the business registration division shall  
17 be deposited into the compliance resolution fund under  
18 subsection (o).

19 The director may appoint program specialists, not subject  
20 to chapter 76, to assist with the activities of the professional  
21 and vocational licensing division.



1 (m) Notwithstanding section 92-17 or any other law to the  
2 contrary, all boards, commissions, and regulatory programs  
3 placed within the department of commerce and consumer affairs  
4 for administrative purposes shall delegate their authority to  
5 receive, arbitrate, investigate, and prosecute complaints to the  
6 department.

7 (n) Each board and commission, as well as the director, by  
8 written order, may delegate to the executive secretary or other  
9 personnel of the department any of its powers or duties as it  
10 deems reasonable and proper for the administration of the  
11 licensing laws that are within the jurisdiction of the  
12 department of commerce and consumer affairs. The delegated  
13 powers and duties may be exercised by the executive secretary or  
14 other personnel of the department in the name of the board,  
15 commission, or the director. However, neither a board, a  
16 commission, nor the director shall delegate the authority to  
17 adopt, amend, or repeal rules or take final disciplinary action  
18 against a licensee.

19 (o) Every person licensed under any chapter within the  
20 jurisdiction of the department of commerce and consumer affairs  
21 and every person licensed subject to chapter 485A or registered



1 under chapter 467B shall pay upon issuance of a license, permit,  
2 certificate, or registration a fee and a subsequent annual fee  
3 to be determined by the director and adjusted from time to time  
4 to ensure that the proceeds, together with all other fines,  
5 income, and penalties collected under this section, do not  
6 surpass the annual operating costs of conducting compliance  
7 resolution activities required under this section. The fees may  
8 be collected biennially or pursuant to rules adopted under  
9 chapter 91, and shall be deposited into the special fund  
10 established under this subsection. Every filing pursuant to  
11 chapter 514E or section 485A-202(a)(26) shall be assessed, upon  
12 initial filing and at each renewal period in which a renewal is  
13 required, a fee that shall be prescribed by rules adopted under  
14 chapter 91, and that shall be deposited into the special fund  
15 established under this subsection. Any unpaid fee shall be paid  
16 by the licensed person, upon application for renewal,  
17 restoration, reactivation, or reinstatement of a license, and by  
18 the person responsible for the renewal, restoration,  
19 reactivation, or reinstatement of a license, upon the  
20 application for renewal, restoration, reactivation, or  
21 reinstatement of the license. If the fees are not paid, the



1 director may deny renewal, restoration, reactivation, or  
2 reinstatement of the license. The director may establish,  
3 increase, decrease, or repeal the fees when necessary pursuant  
4 to rules adopted under chapter 91. The director may also  
5 increase or decrease the fees pursuant to section 92-28.

6 There is created in the state treasury a special fund to be  
7 known as the compliance resolution fund to be expended by the  
8 director's designated representatives as provided by this  
9 subsection. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, and as  
10 provided by section 241-7, all revenues, fees, and fines  
11 collected by the department shall be deposited into the  
12 compliance resolution fund. Unencumbered balances existing on  
13 June 30, 1999, in the cable television fund under chapter 440G,  
14 the division of consumer advocacy fund under chapter 269, the  
15 financial institution examiners' revolving fund, section  
16 412:2-109, the special handling fund, section 414-13, and  
17 unencumbered balances existing on June 30, 2002, in the  
18 insurance regulation fund, section 431:2-215, shall be deposited  
19 into the compliance resolution fund. This provision shall not  
20 apply to the drivers education fund underwriters fee, sections  
21 431:10C-115 and 431:10G-107, insurance premium taxes and



1 revenues, revenues of the workers' compensation special  
2 compensation fund, section 386-151, the captive insurance  
3 administrative fund, section 431:19-101.8, the insurance  
4 commissioner's education and training fund, section 431:2-214,  
5 the medical malpractice patients' compensation fund as  
6 administered under section 5 of Act 232, Session Laws of Hawaii  
7 1984, and fees collected for deposit in the office of consumer  
8 protection restitution fund, section 487-14, the real estate  
9 appraisers fund, section 466K-1, the real estate recovery fund,  
10 section 467-16, the real estate education fund, section 467-19,  
11 the contractors recovery fund, section 444-26, the contractors  
12 education fund, section 444-29, the condominium education trust  
13 fund, section 514B-71, and the mortgage foreclosure dispute  
14 resolution special fund, section 667-86. Any law to the  
15 contrary notwithstanding, the director may use the moneys in the  
16 fund to employ, without regard to chapter 76, hearings officers  
17 and attorneys. All other employees may be employed in  
18 accordance with chapter 76. Any law to the contrary  
19 notwithstanding, the moneys in the fund shall be used to fund  
20 the operations of the department. The moneys in the fund may be



1 used to train personnel as the director deems necessary and for  
2 any other activity related to compliance resolution.

3 A separate special subaccount of the compliance resolution  
4 fund, to be known as the post-secondary education authorization  
5 special subaccount, shall be established for fees collected by  
6 the department of commerce and consumer affairs pursuant to  
7 chapter 305J. The special subaccount shall be governed by  
8 section 305J-19.

9 As used in this subsection, unless otherwise required by  
10 the context, "compliance resolution" means a determination of  
11 whether:

- 12 (1) Any licensee or applicant under any chapter subject to  
13 the jurisdiction of the department of commerce and  
14 consumer affairs has complied with that chapter;
- 15 (2) Any person subject to chapter 485A has complied with  
16 that chapter;
- 17 (3) Any person submitting any filing required by chapter  
18 514E or section 485A-202(a)(26) has complied with  
19 chapter 514E or section 485A-202(a)(26);
- 20 (4) Any person has complied with the prohibitions against  
21 unfair and deceptive acts or practices in trade or



1 commerce; or

2 (5) Any person subject to chapter 467B has complied with  
3 that chapter;

4 and includes work involved in or supporting the above functions,  
5 licensing, or registration of individuals or companies regulated  
6 by the department, consumer protection, and other activities of  
7 the department.

8 The director shall prepare and submit an annual report to  
9 the governor and the legislature on the use of the compliance  
10 resolution fund. The report shall describe expenditures made  
11 from the fund including non-payroll operating expenses.

12 (p) Any law to the contrary notwithstanding, the  
13 department of commerce and consumer affairs, or any board or  
14 commission placed within it for administrative purposes, may  
15 contract with professional testing services to prepare,  
16 administer, and grade examinations and tests for license  
17 applicants. For these purposes, the department may require  
18 applicants to pay the examination fee directly to the testing  
19 agency.

20 (q) Any law to the contrary notwithstanding, when any type  
21 of bond or insurance required to be maintained by any licensee



1 under a regulatory program of the department of commerce and  
2 consumer affairs, or of any board or commission assigned to the  
3 department of commerce and consumer affairs, cannot reasonably  
4 be secured, the department, board, or commission may provide by  
5 rule for alternative forms of security to the consumer so long  
6 as that alternate security is no less than that provided by the  
7 type of bond or insurance initially required.

8 (r) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the  
9 department of commerce and consumer affairs, or any board or  
10 commission placed within it for administrative purposes, may  
11 change any license renewal date by rules adopted in accordance  
12 with chapter 91.

13 (s) The director of commerce and consumer affairs may  
14 establish advisory committees, the members of which shall serve  
15 as consultants to the boards and to the director in their review  
16 of licensees referred for possible disciplinary action and as  
17 experts to the department for investigations and professional  
18 vocational licensing matters. Each advisory committee shall be  
19 appointed by the director from a list of licensees submitted  
20 annually by the board or by referral from the regulated industry  
21 for which an advisory committee is appointed. Each member of



1 the committee shall serve until a new committee is established  
2 or until the particular case for which the member was designated  
3 a consultant or expert has been concluded.

4 All members of the advisory committee shall serve  
5 voluntarily and without compensation, but shall be paid  
6 reasonable allowances for travel and expenses that may be  
7 incurred as a result of performance of their duties on the  
8 committee. The costs shall be paid by the department.

9 Any member of the advisory committee shall be immune from  
10 civil liability for any act done in connection with this  
11 subsection.

12 (t) The director of commerce and consumer affairs shall  
13 make all business registration applications available online.  
14 All applications shall contain the name and contact information,  
15 including the phone number, electronic mail address, and mailing  
16 address, of the registering entity."

17 SECTION 2. This Act does not affect rights and duties that  
18 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were  
19 begun before its effective date.

20 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
21 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.



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

2

INTRODUCED BY:

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JAN 17 2025



# H.B. NO. 453

**Report Title:**

DCCA; Business Registration Data; Online

**Description:**

Requires the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to make all business registration applications available online.

Requires all applications to contain certain contact information.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

