

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 66

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 06 2025

RE: S.B. No. 267

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred S.B. No. 267 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO DISTRICT COURT JUDGES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish one additional district court judgeship in the Third Circuit.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Judiciary, Office of the Public Defender, one member of the Kaua'i County Council, Hawaii State Bar Association, Collection Law Section of the Hawaii State Bar Association, and Hawaii Financial Services Association.

Your Committee finds that when the first district court judge was sworn in in Kona nearly forty years ago, the population served by the court was just over twenty-three thousand residents. Since then, the population has nearly tripled to over sixty-two thousand residents. Judicial resources in the Third Circuit have not kept pace with this explosive growth. Despite the increase in population and corresponding increase in case filings, the Kona district court continues to rely on a single judge. To accommodate the extraordinary volume of cases, the Kona district court has been forced to schedule nearly every available minute of court time, with traffic court calendars routinely exceeding seventy individual defendants in a single morning. This relentless pace also compromises the judge's ability to address



other critical judicial duties, such as reviewing search warrants, making judicial determinations of probable cause, and processing applications for temporary restraining orders. This measure will reduce individual caseloads while also allowing the Kona district court to operate more efficiently, dispose of cases more promptly, and provide litigants and victims with more timely and equitable justice.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 267 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



