

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 07 2025**

RE: S.B. No. 609  
S.D. 1

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

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, to which was referred S.B. No. 609 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF VETERANS' SERVICES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to appropriate moneys to the Office of Veterans' Services to perform its statutory duties, including maintaining a center that provides information, counsel, aid, and assistance to veterans, their families, and their dependents; and cooperating with federal agencies responsible for the administration of rights and benefits granted to veterans, their families, and their dependents.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from Office of Veterans' Services, Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Hawai'i, and two individuals.

Your Committee finds that within the Office of Veterans' Services, veterans services counselors are the primary liaisons and advocates to support and assist veterans with accessing benefits and resources afforded to them. Currently, veterans services counselors can access legal guidance on a consultation basis to assist with complex cases. Often, these cases require multiple appeals and hearings and can be time-intensive and challenging to case manage for those assisting multiple veterans



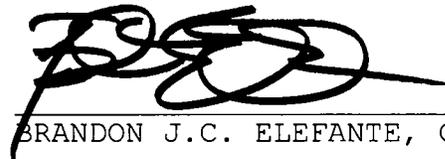
at one time. Your Committee notes that according to testimony provided by the Office of Veterans' Services at the public hearing on this measure, the Office would utilize appropriated funds to provide an in-house capacity to provide legal assistance for complex cases and claims. Additionally, the Office would establish a Transition Assistance Program to assist service members with their transition from military service to civilian life. This program will assist veterans with employment, access to medical care, behavioral health services, relocation, and other identified needs.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2077, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 609, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 609, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Public Safety and  
Military Affairs,



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BRANDON J.C. ELEFANTE, Chair



