

JAN 23 2026

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO HEARING LOSS.

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

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that hearing loss affects  
2 nearly two hundred sixteen thousand Hawaii residents, including  
3 seventy-nine thousand residents who report deafness or serious  
4 hearing difficulty. Unfortunately, these conditions are likely  
5 to be underreported, and the true number of individuals living  
6 with hearing loss is probably higher.

7       The legislature further finds that hearing loss  
8 disproportionately affects our kupuna. More specifically,  
9 hearing loss affects one in three individuals in their sixties,  
10 two-thirds of those in their seventies, and more than eighty per  
11 cent of individuals in their eighties. Among kupuna, untreated  
12 hearing loss drives isolation, cognitive decline, dementia,  
13 depression, and falls, creating costly social and healthcare  
14 impacts.

15       Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the  
16 department of health to develop and publish a state plan on  
17 hearing loss.



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1       SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall develop and  
2 publish a state plan on hearing loss. At a minimum, the plan  
3 shall:

4       (1) Propose actions to minimize hearing loss and improve  
5 the early identification, diagnosis, screening, and  
6 treatment of hearing loss;

7       (2) Identify common issues, unmet needs, and challenges  
8 faced by persons living with hearing loss;

9       (3) Propose actions to develop new services, increase the  
10 level of existing services, or take other actions  
11 necessary to address the issues, needs, and challenges  
12 identified in paragraph (2); and

13       (4) Address any other matters the department determines to  
14 be appropriate.

15       (b) No later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
16 the regular session of 2027, the department of health shall  
17 submit an interim report to the legislature that includes:

18       (1) The department's progress in developing the state plan  
19 on hearing loss pursuant to subsection (a); and

20       (2) Preliminary findings and recommendations, including  
21 any proposed legislation.



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1 (c) No later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
2 the regular session of 2028, the department of health shall  
3 submit to the legislature and publish on its website a final  
4 report that includes:

5 (1) The finalized state plan on hearing loss pursuant to  
6 subsection (a); and

7 (2) Any other findings and recommendations, including any  
8 proposed legislation.

9 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

10 INTRODUCED BY:  \_\_\_\_\_



# S.B. NO. 2865

**Report Title:**

Kupuna Caucus; DOH; Hearing Loss; State Plan; Report to  
Legislature

**Description:**

Requires the Department of Health to develop and publish a state  
plan on hearing loss. Requires reports to the Legislature prior  
to the 2027 and 2028 Regular Sessions.

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

