THE SENATE
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 3244

JAN 2 8 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, P.L. 93-112, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, P.L. 113-128, requires each state to establish and maintain a statewide independent living council as a condition of receiving federal assistance for independent living services.

The legislature further finds that the State established its statewide independent living council in 1998 as a nonprofit organization under section 510(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and that this council has served the State's independent living community for over twenty-five years.

The legislature further finds that federal law prohibits the statewide independent living council from being established as an entity within a state agency and requires that the council maintain its independence and autonomy.

The legislature recognizes that codifying the State's recognition of the Statewide Independent Living Council of

Hawaii will provide greater permanence, stability, and institutional support for independent living services and the rights of individuals with disabilities in the State.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to provide statutory recognition of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Hawaii and to designate the department of human services, division of vocational rehabilitation, as the designated state entity for the purposes of compliance with federal independent living requirements.

SECTION 2. Chapter 348, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"**§348- Statewide independent living council.** (a) The State recognizes and designates the Statewide Independent Living Council of Hawaii, a nonprofit organization organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, as the State's statewide independent living council for the purposes of compliance with title 29, United States Code, section 796d.

(b) The council shall operate independently and autonomously and shall not be established as an entity within

any state agency, consistent with title 29, United States Code, section 796d.

(c) The council's composition, appointment process, duties, and functions shall be established in accordance with the requirements of title 29, United States Code, section 796d.

(d) The council, in partnership with the centers for independent living and the designated state entity, shall jointly develop, monitor, and evaluate the state plan for independent living.

(e) The department of human services division of vocational rehabilitation shall serve as the designated state entity pursuant to title 29, United States Code, section 796c and title 45, United States Code of Federal Regulations, sections 1329.11 and 1329.12.

(f) The governor shall appoint members of the council in accordance with federal requirements and in consultation with the council, centers for independent living, and individuals with disabilities throughout the State.

(g) The council may receive and expend federal funds, state funds, and private donations for the purpose of carrying out its duties under federal law and this section.

(h) As used in this section:

"Centers for independent living" means community-based cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agencies that are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provide and array of independent living services.

"Council" means the Statewide Independent Living Council of Hawaii.

"Designated state entity" means the state agency designated to receive and distribute federal independent living funds and provide administrative support pursuant to federal law.

"State plan for independent living" means the plan developed pursuant to title 29, United States Code, section 796c that establishes the design and operation of the statewide independent living program."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

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

INTRODUCED BY: _____

S.B. NO. 3244

Report Title:
Statewide Independent Living Council; Vocational Rehabilitation

Description:
Designates the Statewide Independent Living Council of Hawaii as the State's statewide independent living council to comply with federal requirements.

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