



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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MINUTES

Legislative Committee Meeting

Location: Virtual via Zoom and 1010 Richards Street, Room 118

Date: March 16, 2026

Time: 12:15 p.m.

PRESENT: Charlotte Townsend Chairperson; Dayne Greene, Violet Horvath, Committee members; Scott Castor Bryan Mick, Kristine Pagano, Staff

ABSENT: Anthony Akamine, Rosanna Daniel-Kanetake, Committee members

PUBLIC

PARTICIPANTS: Peter Fritz, Che Silvert

SIGN LANGUAGE

INTERPRETERS: Carie Sarver

I. Chairperson Charlotte Townsend called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m.

II. Committee members and staff introduced themselves.

III. Staff reported that no public testimonies were submitted.

IV. Bills and Resolutions

Staff explained there would soon be a resolution introduced "Requesting the Hawaii State Department of Health to Study Accessibility Barriers in Multi-Family Facilities Governed by Homeowners' Associations and not Covered by the Fair Housing Act Design Regulations, Evaluate Whether Statutory Clarification is Warranted, and Assess the Feasibility of a State Matching Assistance Fund to Support Access Modifications."

Justification: Enables those who develop a disability to afford home modifications.

Staff Recommendation: Support.

MOTION: SUPPORT (M/S Horvath/Greene)

V. Update on Number of Bills Committee took a position on and the number of testimonies submitted by staff

Staff reported that to date, the Committee took positions on sixty three (63) bills, staff submitted sixty nine (69) written testimonies and offered additional oral testimony at twenty one (21) hearings.

VI. Review of Bills and Resolutions Already Voted On

- A. [House Bill 1577 House Draft 1](#) – Relating to 911 Services. Requires the 911 Board to establish a Statewide Emergency Safety Profile System Pilot Program and convene a working group. Requires report to the Legislature. Repeals on 6/30/2031. Effective 7/1/300.

Testimony: Public participant Che Silvert from the Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council) testified that the DD Council supports this bill, but the Hawaii 9-1-1 Board which oversees 911 is going to oppose it as they feel the working group in the bill duplicates their Board's function. The DD Council is going to continue to advocate for the bill.

- B. [House Bill 1668 House Draft 1](#) – Relating to Medicaid. Requires the Department of Human Services to allow a full earned income disregard for individuals with disabilities who are between the ages of sixteen and sixty-four years when determining eligibility for Medicaid. Takes effect upon approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Staff reported this bill is still alive.

- C. [House Bill 1700 House Draft 1](#) – Relating to Housing. Includes housing projects for individuals with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs as eligible projects to apply for expedited permits. Repeals 6/30/2031. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported this bill is still alive.

- D. [House Bill 1993 House Draft 1/Senate Bill 2851 Senate Draft 1](#) – Relating to Deaf Individuals. Authorizes deaf motor vehicle owners to register their vehicle as being owned by a deaf individual so that a deafness designation appears when a law enforcement officer accesses the motor vehicle's information. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported this bill is still alive.

Testimony: Public participant Peter Frtiz said these bills had different thresholds for what amount of hearing loss would qualify, and he supports the lower threshold as well as deleting the section

which allows someone to use their last tax return as a method of establishing they meet the definition of deaf under this bill.

- E. [House Bill 2217 House Draft 2](#) – Relating to Identification. Allows applicants for driver's permit, driver's license, or civil identification cards to request a disability notation on their permit, license, or identification card. Requires the Department of Transportation to establish public outreach efforts and coordinate with state and county law enforcement agencies regarding the disability notation. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported this bill is alive and DCAB is supporting its intent. However, the DD Council had concerns with the bill.

Testimony: Public participant Che Silvert from the DD Council testified they have concerns with this bill. In researching information from other states, the only time this was effective was when a specific disability was eligible. There is also a concern by those with hidden disabilities that this would needlessly identify them as having a disability since identifications cards are used in many transactions, other than to interact with law enforcement. There are other ways to focus on law enforcement interactions that could be considered. Bryan Mick added there was also a concern that entities would mistakenly think this notation was required for someone to qualify as disabled under the ADA.

Public participant Peter Fritz mentioned that the bill could be amended to require the notation only appear when a law enforcement officer runs a check in the database, rather than be on the physical identification card.

The Committee agreed to continue supporting the intent of the bill but asked future testimony to reflect the DD Council's concerns.

- F. [House Bill 1731 House Draft 1/Senate Bill 2340 Senate Draft 2](#) – Relating to Community Care Foster Family Homes. Clarifies that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who meet an intermediate care facility or nursing facility level of care shall not be denied residency in a licensed community care foster family home solely because of their disability or enrollment in a specific medicaid waiver program. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported the House version was deferred, however the Senate version crossed over to the House and is still alive.

- G. [Senate Bill 2268 Senate Draft 2](#) – Relating to Equity. Requires all places of public accommodation and public entity construction projects planned and designed after 7/31/2027 to provide at least one universal changing accommodation within the building in a public restroom, with certain exceptions.

Makes conforming amendments to sections 489-6, 489-7.5, and 489-8, HRS, to prevent conflicts among the provisions. Effective 1/1/2525.

Staff reported this bill is still alive. A major amendment was adopted that was suggested by DCAB and the DD Council that changed the requirement for an adult changing table from one per floor to one per building.

- H. [Senate Bill 2852 Senate Draft 1](#) – Relating to Civil Rights. Establishes it as an unlawful discriminatory practice for a place of public accommodation to deny a person with a disability full and equal enjoyment of information related to their services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations by requiring use of information and communication technology that is not accessible to the person. Beginning 7/1/2027, requires each place of public accommodation with 16 or more employees to ensure that all information and communication technology used is accessible to persons with disabilities. Beginning 7/1/2028, requires all places of public accommodations to each ensure that all information and communication technology used is accessible to persons with disabilities. Establishes exceptions. Effective 1/30/2050.

Staff reported this bill is alive. Committee member Violet Horvath asked why the number sixteen (16) was used in order to give smaller businesses an extra year to comply. Staff explained that sixteen (16) is the number of employees which make a business subject to the ADA Title I, which covers employment.

- I. [House Bill 1995/Senate Bill 2850](#) – Relating to Parking for Persons with Disabilities. Provides that people who are blind or deaf are eligible to apply for and receive a disabled paid parking permit.

Staff reported these bills were deferred.

- J. [House Bill 2488 House Draft 2](#) – Relating to the Disability and Communication Access Board. Requires the Disability and Communication Access Board to study the health care communication needs of patients who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind. Requires a report to the Legislature 20 days prior to the 2027 Regular Session. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported this bill is alive.

- K. [House Bill 2489 House Draft 1/Senate Bill 2412 Senate Draft 1](#) – Relating to the University of Hawaii. Appropriates moneys to establish a bachelor's degree program in American Sign Language interpretation at the University of Hawai'i Manoa campus with a multi-year plan to include a master's degree program for interpreter training. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported these bills are alive.

- L. [Senate Bill 2366](#) – Relating to Parking for Persons with Disabilities. Amends the fee exemption period for individuals possessing a disabled paid parking

exemption permit from the first 2.5 hours or the maximum amount of time the meter allows, whichever is longer, to the first 4.5 hours.

Staff reported this bill was deferred.

- M. [House Bill 2375 House Draft 2](#) – Relating to Towing Practices. Establishes a Uniform Towing Practices for Public Parking Facilities Working Group within the Department of Transportation to examine existing state and county laws, ordinances, rules, and administrative practices relating to towing from public parking facilities and develop recommendations for uniform standards applicable to towing from state and county parking facilities. Requires a report to the Legislature. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported this bill is alive. DCAB is requesting to be added as a member to the working group.

- N. [House Bill 2442 House Draft 2](#) – Relating to Parking for Disabled Persons. Beginning 7/1/27, increases the number of required accessible and van accessible parking spaces in parking lots with more than twenty-five parking spaces that are covered by title II or III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, with an exception for qualifying public entities managing large parking inventories that are otherwise compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported this bill and its Senate companion are alive. The University of Hawaii system and the Department of Accounting and General Services were granted amendments to the bill to exclude large state parking lots. Staff does not agree with these exceptions. It is unfair to exempt Title II entities by holding comparable Title III entities to a higher standard. It also does not make sense to exempt larger parking lots, as permittees report the larger a parking lot is, the less likely it is to have an available accessible parking space.

- O. [House Bill 2000 House Draft 1](#) / [Senate Bill 2847](#) - Relating to the Right to Repair. Establishes a right to repair for wheelchairs. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported these bills were deferred.

- P. [Senate Bill 2695 Senate Draft 1](#) – Relating to Pedestrian Safety. Clarifies a driver's obligations at crosswalks. Requires drivers to stop and remain stopped for pedestrians in crosswalks. Strengthens penalties for traffic violations, particularly in school zones. Expands the offense of negligent injury in the second degree to include bodily injury to a vulnerable user by the operation of a vehicle in a negligent manner. Effective 1/1/2027.

Staff reported this bill is alive.

- Q. [House Bill 1531 House Draft 2](#) – Relating to Emergency Announcements. Requires the Governor or mayor of a county, during a state of emergency, to

provide an American Sign Language interpreter at each live broadcast press conference. Requires the Governor or mayor of a county to provide a primary pool feed to any live official announcement that includes an American Sign Language interpreter in a picture-in-picture window, and does not require broadcasters that rebroadcast the official announcement to independently generate or insert this accessibility feature. Requires, to the fullest extent possible, that the American Sign Language interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands are visible. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported this bill is alive, and the contents of its House companion were inserted into [Senate Bill 2109 Senate Draft 2](#) which is also still alive.

- R. [House Bill 2443 House Draft 1](#) – Relating to Disaster Services. Integrates the needs of individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into emergency planning, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities. Establishes a Disability Integration Specialist position, to be located in the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, who shall provide programming support for disability community projects that promote accessibility, inclusion, and equity in disaster management. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000.

Staff reported this bill is alive.

- S. [Senate Bill 3045 Senate Draft 1](#) – Relating to Health Insurance. Requires all health insurers in the State, including Medicaid managed care programs, to cover the cost of continuous glucose monitors and related supplies under certain conditions. Applies to insurance policies, contracts, plans, or agreements issued or renewed in the State after 12/31/2026. Effective 1/30/2050.

Staff reported this bill is alive.

- T. [Senate Bill 2921 Senate Draft 1](#) – Relating to State Funds. Transfers to the general fund the excess balances of various non-general funds and programs.

Staff reported this bill is alive but had been amended to remove the accessible parking fund.

The Committee approved all of the positions it took today.

MOTION: APPROVED (M/S/P Horvath/Greene)

- VII. Discussion on proposed State screening programs and the Americans with Disabilities Act's 2008 Amendment's expanded regulatory definition of major bodily functions. <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-28/chapter-I/part-36/subpart-A/section-36.105>

Staff explained that one of the reasons so many bills relating to screening programs for various medical conditions have been included for the Committee's review is that the 2008 ADA Amendments made it clear that a major bodily function is a major life

activity and “need not limit other major life activities in order to be considered a disability.” There are people who are entitled to ADA protections but do not know because they have not been diagnosed. An early diagnosis is not only important for medical treatment purposes, but also allows the person to assert their rights under ADA Title I Employment.

VIII. The meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m.

NOTE: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

BRYAN K. MICK