

SCR 7



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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March 5, 2009

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senate Concurrent Resolution 7 – Requesting the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Governor to Create a Home for Life Task Force to Reduce Barriers to Aging in Place and to Facilitate Multigenerational Living

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is a statewide board with seventeen (17) members appointed by the Governor, thirteen (13) of whom are persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full inclusion, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society. This testimony represents a position voted upon by the Legislative Committee of the Board.

DCAB supports both Senate Concurrent Resolution 7 and Senate Resolution 10 requesting the creation of a Home for Life Task Force to reduce barriers to aging in place and to facilitate multigenerational living.

Through its numerous phone calls and inquiries, the DCAB staff have observed the difficulties faced by many individuals with disabilities when their physical residence is no longer able to accommodate their mobility limitations. While we review the new construction and alteration of public housing, public-supported housing via tax credits, Hawaiian Home sites, and transient lodging (shelters) these residential arrangements represent a fraction of the locations where people live. We need to also examine single family construction and alteration strategies and promote public policies which allow for living in one's home as long as desired.

The 'aging in place' concept not only refers to people who are elderly and want to 'age in place' but for people with disabilities who want to 'live in place.' Both groups have a common desire to stay in a home that is familiar and avoid more costly institutional care.

We offer the following minor comments:

- 1) The resolution references "multi-generational" homes. We suggest the words "multi-generational or accessible" homes, as some individuals with disabilities are only seeking accessibility features.
- 2) We recommend adding the Disability and Communication Access Board to the list at the end of the resolution for distribution.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES W. FLEMING
Chairperson

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
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March 5, 2009

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services
Twenty-Fifth Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: SCR 7 and SR 10 – REQUESTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND THE GOVERNOR TO CREATE A HOME FOR LIFE TASK FORCE TO REDUCE BARRIERS TO AGING IN PLACE AND TO FACILITATE MULTIGENERATIONAL LIVING

The position and views expressed in this testimony do not represent nor reflect the position and views of the Departments of Health (DOH) or Human Services (DHS).

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS THE INTENT OF SCR 7 AND SR 10**. The purpose of the measure is to create a Home for Life task force to coordinate research and to reduce barriers to aging in place and facilitate multi-generational living. SCR 7 directs the task force to submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the 2010 Legislature and Joint Legislative Committee on Aging in Place (JLCAIP).

The Council has participated in the meetings of JLCAIP, which is tasked with developing a comprehensive public policy to strengthen support for family caregivers who provide unpaid, informal assistance to persons 60 years of age and older with physical or cognitive disabilities and for grandparents raising grandchildren.

Pursuant to Act 11, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2008, JLCAIP submitted Joint Special Committee Report No.1 indicating a need to explore ways to reduce physical barriers in the home environment to enable people to remain in their homes for as long as possible, to encourage the adoption of universal design principles, and facilitate multi-generational living.

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland
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The report recommended that a task force be created to address the four major areas or issues included in SCR 7 and SR 10. The Council believes that the findings and recommendations of the task force would be of value in efforts to reduce barriers and establish more housing options to facilitate community living and to accommodate the needs of older adults, as well as individuals with disabilities.

The Council notes that pursuant to SCR 144 SD1 (2006), the DOH Office of Health Care Assurance and DHS Adult and Community Care Services Branch convened a task force to look at the development of a long-term care infrastructure plan that would ensure public safety while supporting aging in place and reported its findings and recommendations to the 2007 Legislature. The task force addressed areas related to DOH and DHS regulations to structural compliance, quality of care, and quality of life to the elderly, the balance between allowing aging in place and the State's responsibility to ensure safety of residents and their quality of care; and inconsistencies, disparities, and non-uniformity in laws and regulations at the State and County levels of government, including current County building and fire codes.

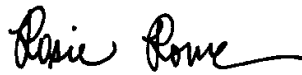
The findings and recommendations in the SCR 144 SD1 report may provide valuable information for the Home for Life task force in its efforts to examine the areas set forth in SCR 7 and SR 10.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to present testimony supporting the intent of SCR 7 and SR 10.

Sincerely,



Waynette K.Y. Cabral
Executive Administrator



Rosie Rowe
Chair



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

1360 S. Beretania St., Suite 301, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

Testimony by:

Virginia Tully, OTR, MBA

SCR 7/SR10, Requesting the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Governor to Create a Home for Life Task Force to Reduce Barriers to Aging in Place and to Facilitate Multigenerational Living

Sen. HMS Hearing – Thurs. March 5, 2009

Room 016 – 1:15 pm

Position: Support Intent, with Amendments

Chair Chun Oakland, and Members of the Senate HMS Committee:

I am Virginia Tully, OTR, and past-president of the Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii, (OTAH), which represents 507 occupational therapists (OTs) licensed in Hawaii. OT's work in many settings throughout the State, including hospitals, schools, and prisons, to private facilities and community programs. We work with very young children, ages 0-3, as well as school aged children, adults, and the elderly, seeking to restore or develop social-emotional, physical, cognitive, communication and adaptive behavior challenges.

Through understanding of the effect of the consumer's disability, illness and impairment, the occupational therapist develops a program that will promote development and establish needed skills to be independent in daily living activities. Daily living skills include self-care such as bathing, dressing, and skills required for learning, work or social interaction. Often times, OTs must design/fabricate special devices or suggest modification to the home environment.

Occupational therapy practitioners assist patients/clients with planning and improving their home environment to promote independence within the home. We support the intent of the resolution.

Suggested Amendment: We suggest including the Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii, which is an affiliate of the American Occupational Therapy Association.

Rationale: Occupational therapy (OT) promotes participation in the home and community by restoring, maintaining skills needed for activities of daily living (ADL). ADL skills include self-care skills, meal preparation, etc.

OTs evaluate the skills of the patient/client and the environmental features that support or limit performance of skills at home. Based on patient/client assessment, OT recommends modification that will improve the environment to support independence and safety within the home.

OTs supports environmental design that removes barriers to allow the individual to be independent and safe at home. Occupational therapists assist patients/clients in identifying these barriers and recommend modifications as appropriate.

The OTAH offers its expertise and participation in the proposed Task Force. I can be reached at 544-3336 if further information is needed.

Testimony by:
Lucy Lessard, PT



SCR 7/SR10, Requesting the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Governor to Create a Home for Life Task Force to Reduce Barriers to Aging in Place and to Facilitate Multigenerational Living
Sen. HMS Hearing – Thurs. March 5, 2009
Room 016 – 1:15 pm

Position: Support

Chair Chun Oakland, and Members of the Sen HMS Committee:

I am Lucy Lessard, P.T., and Chair of the HAPTA Legislative Committee and member of the Hawaii Chapter – American Physical Therapy Association (HAPTA). The Hawaii Chapter – American Physical Therapy Association (HAPTA) is comprised of 300 member physical therapists and physical therapist assistants employed in hospitals and health care facilities, the Department of Education and Department of Health systems, and private practice. Our members represent Hawaii at the national American Physical Therapy Association and are delegates for Pediatrics, Women’s Health, Parkinson’s Disease and other issue sections. We are part of the spectrum of care for Hawaii, and provide rehabilitative services for infants and children, youth, adults and the elderly. Rehabilitative services are a vital part of restoring optimum function from neuromusculoskeletal injuries and impairments.

We support this creation of a life task force to reduce barriers to aging in place and to facilitate multigenerational living. As PTs throughout the State, we see Hawaii’s older generation living longer and staying at home more often than in other states. We see that there is a chronic lack of long term care, and it is in our collective best interest to keep these citizens in their homes as long as possible.

However, we also see many elders living in unsafe situations due a combination of their impairments and disabilities and the design of their lodging. Elders have unique impairments that require special design elements above and beyond adaptations in order to keep them safe and prevent injuries. Physical therapists, through training and education, have unique skills in dealing with elders who are healthy, impaired and disabled to keep them supported in their homes.

We are very interested in participating in the Task Force and look forward to working with all stakeholders on this important issue. I can be reached at (808) 547-6292 if there are any questions.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

Conference room: 016
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Anthony Lenzer
Organization: Individual
Address: 222 Kuukama St. Kailua, HI
Phone: 808-261-2095
E-mail: Tlenzer@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 3/3/2009

Comments:

Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Anthony Lenzer. I am a Professor Emeritus of Public Health and Former Director of the Center on Aging at the University of Hawaii. I am also a member of the ad hoc working group which drafted the proposal for the Home for Life Task Force. I am testifying in strong support of SCR 7, and also SR 10.

These Resolutions would create a Legislatively-endorsed Task Force to deal with three issues: (1) reducing physical barriers to enable persons with disabilities and frail elders to remain in their own homes as long as possible; (2) encouraging adoption of Universal design principles in new and retrofitted housing; and (3) facilitating multigenerational housing.

Why are these issues important? Consider the first issue, reducing physical barriers in the home. Hawaii's population is aging rapidly, and medical science is enabling many persons with severe disabilities to live longer, often in to their later years. With regard to housing, the majority of these older people own their own homes. They are typically single-family dwellings built many years ago. Many local and national studies indicate that older people want to remain in their own homes as long as possible. Yet a combination of factors makes it increasingly difficult. On the one hand, as people age, they developed impairments and physical limitations. On the other, homes constructed in the 1950s and 60s are often not physically suitable for persons who are frail or disabled. Evidence for this is found in the State Department of Health's injury prevention and control program report of September 2009: "every five hours in the Hawaii a senior suffers a fall injury so serious that they must be hospitalized. Among seniors in Hawaii, falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries, injury related hospitalizations, and hospitalizations for traumatic brain injury. They are a major threat to the independence and quality of life of seniors." And, needless to say, avoiding hospitalization and placement in long-term care facilities is also critically important as a way to preserve the State's limited funding for health care services.

Universal design is a way to create products and environments which can be used by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptations or specialized design. Some of the more common features of Universal design housing are: no-step entry; one story living; wide doorways and hallways; non-slip floors; good lighting; and lever door handles. Universal design homes provide more comfortable living for people with and without disabilities. Many of these

features can be retrofitted into existing homes, and all can be included in new construction. Thus, Universal Design facilitates aging in place.

Recent studies indicate that Hawaii has a higher proportion of multi-generational households than the national average. This is understandable, given the extremely high cost of home ownership and of rental housing in Hawaii. In fact, for the past three years, Hawaii has had the highest average rents in the nation (Census Bureau data reported in the Honolulu Advertiser, September 23, 2008). Thus, many younger people can be expected to move in with her parents for a period of time until they are able to find housing on their own. Adult children also live with their parents to facilitate Caregiving. A 2007 Hawaii study found that one fourth of the state's 118,000 adults who were caregivers for elderly parents lived in the same household as their parents (State of Hawaii family caregiver needs assessment. Prepared for the Joint Legislative Committee on Family Caregiving. December 2007). multi-generational households can be created by Hawaii's Ohana zoning regulations. However, our initial review of these regulations indicates that they do create serious barriers to the generations living together in a way which maintains the independence and privacy of the generations.

For these and other reasons, I strongly urge the Committee to support SCR 7 and SR 10. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.