
SENATE RESOLUTION

ENCOURAGING THE STATE AND THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC PLAYGROUND THAT ALLOWS VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN TO FREELY EXPLORE THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND INTERACT WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS IN A SAFE, WELCOMING, AND DEVELOPMENTALLY ENRICHING ENVIRONMENT.

1 WHEREAS, for over one hundred years Americans have
2 recognized the physical, emotional, and cognitive benefits of a
3 well-equipped playground; and
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5 WHEREAS, the concept of "playgrounds" as dedicated sites
6 and structures where children may safely grow to understand the
7 meaning of cooperation emerged in industrial Europe, where
8 public streets had become too dangerous, and most backyards too
9 small, to accommodate the vigorous games children use to expend
10 energy and develop skills; and
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12 WHEREAS, after German primary schools pioneered a
13 playground system, America dedicated its first public playground
14 in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in 1887; and
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16 WHEREAS, the social skills children develop through free
17 and spontaneous play of the sort that occurs on playgrounds
18 create lifelong skill sets carried forward into adulthood,
19 rendering playgrounds among the most formative environments for
20 child development outside the home; and
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22 WHEREAS, as a child navigates the physical and social
23 environment, learning to climb, swing, balance, and communicate
24 with minimal supervisory interference, physical mastery and
25 self-development allow confidence to emerge; and
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27 WHEREAS, research repeatedly confirms that physical
28 activity during childhood produces health benefits with lifelong
29 ramifications including reduced risk of psychological problems,
30 ameliorated disease risk factors, weight optimization, the
31 attainment of peak bone mass, and enhanced self-esteem to a
32 degree determined by quality of play; and



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2 WHEREAS, in 2011 approximately 60,000 children under the
3 age of eighteen were categorized as legally blind in the United
4 States; and

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6 WHEREAS, "legally blind" is defined as visual acuity of
7 20/200 or less in the best eye and a visual field no better than
8 twenty degrees, and "vision difficulty" is defined as serious
9 trouble seeing even when wearing optical corrective devices,
10 according to the Annual Report from the American Printing House
11 for the Blind; and

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13 WHEREAS, in Hawaii specifically, 1.2 percent of the
14 population is currently eligible for Blind and Disabled
15 Supplemental Security Income as of 2013; and

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17 WHEREAS, to safely play at a fundamental level of
18 independence, blind children require playground design
19 accommodations such as ramps, detectable warning tiles, rubber
20 surfaces, bucket swing seats, railings, crawl tubes, and
21 entertaining ground features; and

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23 WHEREAS, each year emergency departments in the United
24 States treat over 200,000 children under the age of fourteen for
25 playground-related injuries, and seventy-six percent of those
26 injuries occurred in public parks; and

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28 WHEREAS, the Consumer Product Safety Commission
29 investigated one hundred forty-seven playground-related deaths
30 between 1990 and 2000, and forty such deaths from 2001 to 2008;
31 and

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33 WHEREAS, medical costs of playground injuries to children
34 fourteen and younger exceed \$2,000,000,000 annually; and

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36 WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title III,
37 was passed in 1990, stating that no individual may be
38 discriminated against upon the basis of disability with regards
39 to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services,
40 facilities, or accommodations of any place of public
41 accommodation, and this measure took effect in July of 1992,
42 from that time forward requiring the compliance of all newly
43 constructed public facilities; and
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1 WHEREAS, a truly inclusive playground ensures that children
2 of multiple abilities can play together, not simply alongside
3 one another; and

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5 WHEREAS, progressive recreation managers realize that
6 playgrounds must offer more than the bare minimum requirements
7 set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act, which merely
8 allow wheelchairs to reach play equipment or provide disabled
9 children a single accessible swing per set; on the contrary, an
10 inclusive playground ensures that all children, regardless of
11 ability, can develop a sense of mastery and involvement across
12 the total environment; and

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14 WHEREAS, while the benefits of inclusive playgrounds to
15 blind children are obvious, sighted children also gain from
16 interacting with their visually-impaired peers, for inclusive
17 play teaches young people about challenges and lifestyles unlike
18 their own, thus allowing sighted children to grow into more
19 informed, compassionate members of their broader communities;
20 and

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22 WHEREAS, not one county throughout Hawaii currently
23 provides its public with a playground inclusive to the blind
24 community specifically or to the disabled community in general;
25 and

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27 WHEREAS, nearly every other state and territory in the
28 nation has designed, or has made plans to design, at least one
29 inclusive playground for some segment of the disabled community;
30 and

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32 WHEREAS, only six other states - Alaska, Maine, Montana,
33 Nebraska, New Mexico, and Wyoming - likewise fail to offer a
34 single dedicated playground to disabled children; now,
35 therefore,

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37 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-seventh
38 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2013,
39 that the State and City and County of Honolulu are urged to
40 seriously consider the establishment of an accessible public
41 playground that allows visually impaired children to freely
42 explore their environment and interact with their families and
43 friends in a safe, welcoming, and developmentally enriching
44 environment; and



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2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
3 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Comptroller,
4 Department of Accounting and General Services, Director of Human
5 Services, Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
6 Resources, Honolulu City Council, Mayor of the City and County
7 of Honolulu, and Honolulu City Clerk.
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