

JAN 22 2016

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH SCREENINGS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that vision and hearing
2 are critical to speech and language development, communication,
3 and learning. Research indicates that eighty per cent of
4 learning during a child's first year is obtained through vision,
5 and those unable to read well by the end of grade three are more
6 likely to drop out of school or be held back. More importantly,
7 most undetected or undiagnosed vision issues can become
8 permanent if untreated before age six. Hearing is also critical
9 to learning and child development, and hearing screenings can
10 generate a return of \$112 for every \$1 spent.

11 To ensure the health of the children of Hawaii, the
12 legislature enacted Act 312, Session Laws of Hawaii 1992, which
13 established a systematic hearing and vision program for children
14 to detect and identify hearing and vision deficiencies in school
15 children and recommend to parents or guardians the need for
16 appropriate evaluation. The department of health successfully
17 implemented the program, but a lack of funding for the program



1 caused the program to become and remain inactive for quite some
2 time.

3 The legislature further finds that there are some isolated
4 community screening programs offered by local nonprofits in some
5 areas of the State. However, not all children have access to
6 these screenings, which inhibits accurate statewide data
7 collection and assurance for the quality of the screening.

8 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to
9 establish a position within the department of health to
10 implement a systematic vision and hearing program for the
11 children of Hawaii and to cover operating expenses for the
12 program.

13 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
15 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for
16 one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position to implement a
17 systematic vision and hearing program and for operating expenses
18 of the program, including administrative oversight, support in
19 vision and screening implementation, follow-up, and aggregate
20 data collection and reporting.



1 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
2 health for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.
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S.B. NO. 2334

Report Title:

Vision and Hearing Screening Program; Department of Health;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for one full-time equivalent position within the department of health to implement a systematic vision and hearing program and other operating expenses of the program.

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