SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND TO INCLUDE HEARING AID ASSISTANCE IN THE HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS AVAILABLE TO RETIREE-BENEFICIARIES.

WHEREAS, there are 44,283 retiree-beneficiaries of the Employees' Retirement System of the State of Hawaii, and 9,783 of the beneficiaries are over eighty years of age, including forty-three who are over one hundred years of age; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Institutes of Health, an estimated one-third of Americans between the ages of sixty-five and seventy-five and around one-half of those older than seventy-five have some degree of hearing loss; and

WHEREAS, based on research from the National Institutes of Health and others, hearing loss is now recognized as a significant social and health problem that severely impacts the quality of life of individuals experiencing hearing loss; and

WHEREAS, especially in the elderly, hearing loss can impair the exchange of information, causing loneliness, isolation, dependence, and frustration; and

WHEREAS, Medicare insurance plans only cover hearing testing and do not cover hearing aid purchases and related services; and

WHEREAS, according to the Lions Clubs International Foundation, the average cost of high quality hearing aids is $3,600, and because insurance often does not include hearing aid assistance, many people are left with cheaper, poorly functioning hearing aids; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2017, the
House of Representatives concurring, that this body urges the Board of Trustees of the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund to include in the health benefits plans available to retiree-beneficiaries hearing aid assistance up to eighty percent of the cost of high quality hearing aids; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Board of Trustees of the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund, and Board of Trustees of the Employees' Retirement System of the State of Hawaii.

OFFERED BY: