HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE STATE OF HAWAI'I TO REVIEW AND UPDATE ITS
TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES AND ACCESS FOR THE DEAF,
INDIVIDUALS WITH HEARING DISABILITIES, AND INDIVIDUALS WITH
SPEECH DISABILITIES AND TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE
FEASIBILITY OF INSTALLING HEARING LOOP TECHNOLOGY IN THE
STATE CAPITOL.

WHEREAS, individuals who are deaf or who have a hearing or
speech disability must often utilize technology and technology-based services and equipment to effectively communicate with others; and

WHEREAS, telecommunications relay services are telephone transmission services that provide an individual who has a hearing or speech disability with the ability to engage in communication by wire or radio with a hearing individual in a manner that is functionally equivalent to the ability of an individual who does not have a hearing or speech disability to communicate using wire or radio voice communication services; and

WHEREAS, telecommunications relay services have traditionally meant text-to-voice teletypewriter (TTY)-based services; and

WHEREAS, new internet-based technology is now readily available; and

WHEREAS, many text-to-voice teletypewriter users have switched to other means of communication; and

WHEREAS, a hearing loop, also known as an audio-induction loop, is a wire that circles a room and electromagnetically transmits sound to a compatible hearing aid or cochlear implant, allowing the user to clearly hear the sounds transmitted by the sound system; and
WHEREAS, hearing loop technology installed in the Arizona
and Rhode Island state capitols and across Europe has been used
with success by individuals who are deaf or have a hearing
disability; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arizona installed hearing loop
technology in eight hearing rooms, the Senate and House of
Representatives galleries, and the chamber floors of the Arizona
State Capitol at a cost of $250,000; and

WHEREAS, the position of the National Association of the
Deaf is that it is imperative to periodically update laws and
regulations to incorporate new and emerging telecommunications
equipment and services to ensure continued accessibility and
usability; and

WHEREAS, according to data from the United States Census
Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics, there are
approximately one hundred ten thousand residents in the State
who are deaf or have a hearing or speech disability; and

WHEREAS, the Public Utilities Commission has a
responsibility to implement intrastate telecommunications relay
services for individuals who are deaf or have a hearing or
speech disability; and

WHEREAS, the State has established the Office of Enterprise
Technology Services headed by the Chief Information Officer who
is charged with organizing, managing, and overseeing information
technology governance in the State; and

WHEREAS, the Disability and Communication Access Board
serves as a public advocate for persons with disabilities by
providing advice and recommendations with regard to legislation,
rules, policies, procedures, and plans relating to persons with
disabilities and their civil rights or service needs; now,
therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
of 2018, that the Office of Enterprise Technology Services, in
consultation with the Public Utilities Commission and the
Disability and Communication Access Board, is requested to review existing and emerging telecommunications equipment, services, and policies to ensure continued accessibility and usability for individuals who are deaf or who have a hearing or speech disability, and identify any areas where accessibility and usability can be improved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Enterprise Technology Services, in consultation with the Disability and Communication Access Board, is requested to study the feasibility of installing hearing loop technology in the State Capitol; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include:

(1) The costs, including electrical upgrades, if needed, of installing hearing loop technology in the chambers, auditorium, and all or some of the hearing rooms of the State Capitol; and

(2) An installation schedule for the hearing loop technology; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Enterprise Technology Services, in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission and the Disability and Communication Access Board, is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2019; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chief Information Officer, Chair of the Public Utilities Commission, Director of Health, and Chair of the Disability and Communication Access Board.