HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE JUDICIARY TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF OPENING COMMUNITY OUTREACH COURTS IN PUNA AND KAU.

WHEREAS, the State's first Community Outreach Court has been open in Honolulu for one year as of January 2018; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of Community Outreach Court is to offer combined accountability and treatment options to offenders who may have difficulty resolving cases in a traditional court setting or paying fines imposed; and

WHEREAS, the sentences imposed often utilize alternatives to incarceration or fines, such as community service and mandatory participation in programs deemed appropriate for individual offenders based on their need for specific mental health services, substance abuse treatment, sustenance, and shelter; and

WHEREAS, in its first year of operation, the Honolulu Community Outreach Court has assisted fifty-seven homeless defendants, resolved six hundred one cases involving low-level, nonviolent offenses, imposed nearly six hundred eighty community service hours in lieu of fines or jail, secured housing for nine defendants, helped eleven defendants obtain employment, and facilitated entry into a substance abuse treatment program for five defendants; and

WHEREAS, residents of the island of Hawaii are sometimes cited or arrested for similar low-level and nonviolent offenses; and

WHEREAS, valuable time and resources are currently being expended to bring these individuals to court; and

WHEREAS, for Puna residents, going to court means making a two-hour trip to the Hilo courthouse because the courthouse that
previously served Puna closed on August 1, 2009; and the Kau District Court moved its hearings to Kona District Court in October 2010; 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 Judiciary is requested to study the feasibility of opening Community Outreach Courts in Puna and Kau; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Judiciary is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Hawaii.

OFFERED BY:

MAR 07 2018