
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO REMOTE TESTIMONY IN LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that as an island state,
2 Hawaii's geography poses particular challenges for residents of
3 the counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui to actively participate
4 in the legislative process by testifying in person in committee
5 hearings. Although legislative committees accept written
6 testimony via electronic means, presenting in-person, face-to-
7 face testimony before the legislature is costly and time-
8 consuming for neighbor island residents and others who reside
9 far from the state capitol.

10 Neighbor island residents who physically attend legislative
11 committee hearings to testify on measures and actively engage in
12 the legislative process incur significant air travel and other
13 transportation costs, and in some instances, lodging costs. For
14 these individuals, providing testimony to the legislature in
15 person often means taking time off from work.

16 The legislature recognizes the necessity of expanding
17 opportunities for neighbor island residents and other



1 individuals to enable them to actively participate in the
2 legislative process and weigh in on issues. The legislature
3 also recognizes that face-to-face public testimony can have a
4 significant impact on legislators and the media and that
5 enabling the public to provide live, real-time remote testimony
6 will improve citizen participation in and public access to the
7 legislative process.

8 The legislature further finds that as technology evolves,
9 other state governments have implemented remote committee
10 hearings to bridge the distance between testifiers and
11 legislative committees. In 1978, Alaska established a
12 teleconference network and began holding remote hearings for
13 residents. In 2014, more than four thousand citizens of Alaska
14 participated remotely in five thousand hours of legislative
15 teleconferences. In Nevada, only about two per cent of the
16 state's population lives in the capital city of Carson City,
17 while seventy-six per cent live in the Las Vegas metro area,
18 about four hundred miles away. The Nevada Legislature began
19 videoconference hearings between the two cities in 1991.
20 Between 1997 and 2014 the Nevada Legislature videoconferenced
21 3,294 hearings.



1 The purpose of this Act is to:

2 (1) Establish the remote legislative access program within
3 the legislature's public access program, to be
4 supervised by the joint legislative access committee;
5 and

6 (2) Require each house of the legislature to establish
7 procedures and necessary information infrastructure
8 for the public to present oral testimony at
9 legislative committee hearings through remote
10 testimony.

11 SECTION 2. Chapter 21G, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
12 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
13 and to read as follows:

14 "§21G- Remote legislative access program. (a) There is
15 established in the state capitol a remote legislative access
16 program that shall become part of the legislature's public
17 access program.

18 (b) The remote legislative access program shall be
19 supervised by the joint legislative access committee established
20 pursuant to section 21D-6. When establishing the remote
21 legislative access program, the committee shall:



1 (1) Seek advice and recommendations from experts with
2 knowledge in remote communications, including the
3 chief information officer of the office of enterprise
4 technology services;

5 (2) Seek advice and recommendations from the disability
6 and communication access board, and county council of
7 each respective county in implementing the program;
8 and

9 (3) Consider other States with successful remote
10 communications access programs.

11 (c) The joint legislative access committee shall also
12 consider different methods of communication, including
13 teleconferencing and videoconferencing, and different
14 technologies, which are capable of accommodating individuals
15 with visual or hearing impairments, to administer the program.

16 (d) Each house of the legislature shall establish, by
17 rule, procedures that enable:

18 (1) The legislature to use remote testimony at legislative
19 committee hearings; and

20 (2) The public to present oral testimony at legislative
21 committee hearings through remote testimony.



1 (e) As used in this section, "remote testimony" means the
2 use of video conferencing or other technology that facilitates
3 interaction between the public and members of the legislature
4 and enables the public to submit oral testimony remotely via the
5 Internet or other telecommunications technology during
6 legislative hearings and proceedings."

7 SECTION 3. Section 21D-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
8 amended to read as follows:

9 "~~§~~21D-6 Joint legislative access committee.~~§~~ There
10 is established the joint legislative access committee which
11 shall be composed of members of the legislature. The president
12 of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives
13 shall each appoint a co-chair and two members or more to the
14 committee, one of whom shall be a member of the minority party.

15 The committee shall:

16 (1) Oversee the staff and operations of the legislative
17 broadcast project, and recommend policies for the
18 project, which shall be adopted by concurrent
19 resolution; ~~and~~

20 (2) Oversee the staff and operations of the remote
21 legislative access program, and recommend policies for



1 the program, which shall be adopted in accordance with
2 section 21G- ; and
3 ~~[(2)]~~ (3) Review the operations of the public access room,
4 legislative internet project, remote legislative
5 access program, and other public access projects of
6 the legislature and recommend policies for these
7 projects to the president of the senate and the
8 speaker of the house of representatives."

9 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
11 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and
12 the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary
13 for fiscal year 2020-2021 to carry out the purposes of this Act.

14 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
15 of accounting and general services for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
17 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

18 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.



Report Title:

Remote Testimony; Remote Legislative Access Program;
Legislature; Committee Hearings; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the remote legislative access program, to be supervised by the joint legislative access committee. Specific requirements that the joint legislative access committee must consider when developing the program. Requires each house of the Legislature to establish, by rule, procedures for the public to present oral testimony at legislative committee hearings through remote testimony. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2022. (SD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

