

JAN 18 2019

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE LEGISLATURE.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the public plays an  
2 important role in the legislative process through the testimony  
3 they provide. However, the opportunity to provide testimony in  
4 person at committee hearings may not be available to all members  
5 of the public, especially those who live outside of the urban  
6 core of the island of Oahu and on neighbor islands or those who  
7 experience barriers to access due to disabilities. Individuals  
8 with disabilities often must utilize technology and technology-  
9 based services and equipment to travel or to effectively  
10 communicate with others, but these services and equipment may  
11 not be readily available to them to participate in the  
12 legislative process.

13           The legislature further finds that as technology evolves,  
14 other state governments have implemented remote committee  
15 hearings to bridge the distance between testifiers and  
16 legislative committees. In 1978, Alaska established a  
17 teleconference network and began holding remote hearings for



1 residents. In 2014, more than four thousand citizens of Alaska  
2 participated remotely in five thousand hours of legislative  
3 teleconferences. In Nevada, only about two per cent of the  
4 state's population lives in the capital city of Carson City,  
5 while seventy-six per cent live in the Las Vegas metro area,  
6 about four hundred miles away. The Nevada Legislature began  
7 videoconference hearings between the two cities in 1991. In  
8 2015, seven hundred thirty-seven committee meetings were  
9 conducted by videoconference, with a total of 6,699 citizens  
10 attending.

11 The legislature notes that a videoconferencing pilot  
12 project began in 2014 for use in certain state senate committee  
13 hearings. The pilot project allows individuals to offer  
14 testimony and participate in hearings by teleconference through  
15 a computer with a webcam, microphone, and a reliable internet  
16 connection. The implementation of a program similar to the  
17 videoconferencing pilot project by both houses of the state  
18 legislature will help to improve the legislative process and  
19 provide the public with another means to provide testimony.

20 The purpose of this Act is to increase the available  
21 methods of public participation in the legislative process by



1 establishing a remote legislative access program to enable  
2 Hawaii residents to participate remotely in legislative  
3 proceedings and appropriating funds to establish the program.

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

7 "§21G- Remote legislative access program. (a) There is  
8 established in the state capitol a remote legislative access  
9 program that shall become part of the legislature's public  
10 access program.

11 (b) The remote legislative access program shall be  
12 supervised by the joint legislative access committee established  
13 pursuant to section 21D-6; provided that the committee shall  
14 seek advice and recommendations from expert individuals with  
15 knowledge in remote communications, including the chief  
16 information officer of the office of enterprise technology  
17 services, in implementing the program.

18 (c) In establishing the remote legislative access program,  
19 the joint legislative access committee shall consider different  
20 methods of communication, including teleconference and  
21 videoconference, and different technologies that accommodate



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1 individuals with visual or hearing impairments to administer the  
2 program."

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

5 "[+]§21D-6 Joint legislative access committee.[+] There  
6 is established the joint legislative access committee which  
7 shall be composed of members of the legislature. The president  
8 of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives  
9 shall each appoint a co-chair and two members or more to the  
10 committee, one of whom shall be a member of the minority party.

11 The committee shall:

12 (1) Oversee the staff and operations of the legislative  
13 broadcast project, and recommend policies for the  
14 project which shall be adopted by concurrent  
15 resolution; [~~and~~]

16 (2) Oversee the staff and operations of the remote  
17 legislative access program, and recommend policies for  
18 the program which shall be adopted by concurrent  
19 resolution; and

20 [~~(2)~~] (3) Review the operations of the public access room,  
21 legislative internet project, remote legislative



1           access program, and other public access projects of  
 2           the legislature and recommend policies for these  
 3           projects to the president of the senate and the  
 4           speaker of the house of representatives."

5           SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
 6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                or so much  
 7 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 for the  
 8 establishment of the remote legislative access program.

9           The sum appropriated shall be expended by the legislature  
 10 for the purposes of this Act.

11           SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
 12 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

13           SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.

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INTRODUCED BY:           *Kal Nhoah*            
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**Report Title:**

Remote Legislative Access Program; Establishment; Joint  
Legislative Access Committee; Public Access; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes a Remote Legislative Access Program to allow for the  
submission of testimony remotely. Appropriates funds.

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

