

MAY 15 2020

SENATE RESOLUTION

ESTABLISHING THE SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON COVID-19 AS AN
INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE.

1 WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020, the President of the Senate
2 established the Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 to review
3 state departmental plans and procedures to address the threat of
4 the Coronavirus Disease 2019, or COVID-19, pandemic; assess
5 whether those plans and procedures were properly and timely
6 implemented to safeguard public health and safety; and report
7 its findings to the Senate; and

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9 WHEREAS, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor
10 David Ige has issued stay-at-home orders to safeguard the
11 public's health; and

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13 WHEREAS, as a result of these stay-at-home orders, the
14 number of visitors arriving in Hawaii has dropped from
15 approximately thirty thousand daily visitors to approximately
16 three hundred daily visitors; and

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18 WHEREAS, Governor Ige's stay-at-home orders, coupled with
19 the drastic decline in visitors arriving in Hawaii, has caused
20 the closure of many businesses throughout the State, including
21 hotels and restaurants; and

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23 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused Hawaii's
24 unemployment rate to reach thirty-five per cent, one of the
25 highest unemployment rates in the United States; and

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27 WHEREAS, the high volume of unemployment insurance claims
28 resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmed the ability
29 of the State to issue timely payments, leaving some families
30 without any sources of income; and

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32 WHEREAS, to perform its duties, the Senate Special
33 Committee on COVID-19 held numerous meetings, all of which were
34 live-streamed by Olelo, to gather information from various



1 members of Governor Ige's administration and other relevant
2 individuals; and

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4 WHEREAS, members of the Senate Special Committee on
5 COVID-19 have received thousands of email messages and telephone
6 calls from residents expressing concerns regarding the impacts
7 of the COVID-19 pandemic, including job losses; and

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9 WHEREAS, the Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 proposed
10 to members of Governor Ige's administration and the Incident
11 Commander, Major General Kenneth Hara, numerous ways to ensure
12 the protection of the health, well-being, and finances of
13 Hawaii's residents; and

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15 WHEREAS, by May 11, 2020, the United States had confirmed
16 more than one million three hundred thousand COVID-19 cases and
17 eighty thousand COVID-19-related deaths; and

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19 WHEREAS, nevertheless, many states, including Hawaii, have
20 begun to allow businesses to reopen; and

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22 WHEREAS, allowing businesses to reopen and tourists to
23 continue to arrive in Hawaii during the COVID-19 pandemic
24 increases the risk of a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in the
25 State, further endangering the State's economy and the health of
26 its residents; and

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28 WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing
29 period of economic recovery, coordination between the State and
30 counties is crucial to safeguard the public health; and

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32 WHEREAS, the State is planning for Hawaii's economic
33 recovery and will be expending federal and state COVID-19 relief
34 funds in accordance with those plans; now, therefore,

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36 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature
37 of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, that the Senate
38 Special Committee on COVID-19 that was established and whose
39 membership was modified to include six members pursuant to
40 memorandums issued by the President of the Senate dated
41 March 18, 2020, is established as the Senate Special
42 Investigating Committee on COVID-19, pursuant to chapter 21,



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1 Hawaii Revised Statutes, and Rules 13 and 25 of the Rules of the
2 Senate, and may operate during the 2020 interim to:

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- 4 (1) Assess and advise the Senate regarding the State of
5 Hawaii's COVID-19 plans and procedures;
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- 7 (2) Confirm the development of state and county
8 departmental plans and procedures;
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- 10 (3) Review and assess current state and county
11 departmental plans and procedures;
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- 13 (4) Review and assess whether state and county
14 departmental plans and procedures are properly and
15 timely implemented to safeguard public health and
16 safety;
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- 18 (5) Review, assess, and monitor the State's expenditure of
19 federal and state COVID-19 relief funds;
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- 21 (6) Communicate and disseminate information obtained
22 therefrom; and
23
- 24 (7) Issue subpoenas; and
25

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the current chair and members
27 of the Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 continue to serve on
28 the Senate Special Investigating Committee on COVID-19 in their
29 respective capacities; and
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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate Special
32 Investigating Committee on COVID-19 has every power and function
33 allowed to an investigating committee by law, including without
34 limitation the power to:

- 35
- 36 (1) Adopt rules for the conduct of its proceedings;
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- 38 (2) Issue subpoenas requiring the attendance and testimony
39 of witnesses and subpoenas duces tecum requiring the
40 production of books, documents, records, papers, or
41 other evidence in any matter pending before the
42 investigating committee;



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- (3) Hold hearings appropriate for the performance of its duties, at times and places as the investigating committee determines;
- (4) Administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses at hearings of the investigating committee;
- (5) Report or certify instances of contempt as provided in section 21-14, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (6) Determine the means by which a record shall be made of its proceedings in which testimony or other evidence is demanded or adduced;
- (7) Provide for the submission, by a witness's own counsel and counsel for another individual or entity about whom the witness has devoted substantial or important portions of the witness's testimony, of written questions to be asked of the witness by the chair; and
- (8) Exercise all other powers specified under chapter 21, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and the Rules of the Senate, with respect to an investigating committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the President of the Senate may from time to time refer for investigation specific matters that are within the scope of the Senate Special Investigating Committee on COVID-19's jurisdiction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate Special Investigating Committee on COVID-19 submit its written findings and recommendations to the Senate prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2021 and cease to exist upon the adjournment sine die of the Regular Session of 2021 unless extended; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Director of Health; Director of Transportation; Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Adjutant General; Attorney General;



1 Mayor and county council Chair of each county; and the President
2 and Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Tourism Authority.

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