

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1112

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 19 , 2021

RE: H.R. No. 25

Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2021  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.R. No. 25 entitled:

"HOUSE RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM TO RECRUIT AND EMPLOY QUALIFIED BLIND PERSONS TO SERVE AS ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY INSTRUCTORS AND IN OTHER POSITIONS AS TEACHERS OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to urge the Department of Education to develop and implement an affirmative action program designed to recruit and employ qualified blind professionals to serve as orientation and mobility instructors and in other positions as teachers of visually impaired students.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Disability and Communication Access Board and eleven individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services.

Your Committee finds that, up until recently, the Department of Education only accepted the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist certification. The Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist certification is a training method that provides a vision-centered approach to orientation and mobility services and emphasizes instructors who are sighted.

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Your Committee, however, further finds that another training method--the National Orientation and Mobility Certification--utilizes methods and principles from decades of lived experiences, attitudes, and techniques of blind persons and emphasizes instructors who are blind. It is considered a best practice to hire individuals with the National Orientation and Mobility Certification. While the Hawaii Teachers Standards Board has begun to accept the National Orientation and Mobility Certification, this has not led to an increased reliance on blind instructors and the Department of Education does not currently employ any instructors with the National Orientation and Mobility Certification. This measure will provide students who are blind or vision impaired with greater access to various training methods.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of H.R. No. 25 and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Education,

  
JUSTIN H. WOOLSON, Chair



