

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

60

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 06 , 2023

RE: H.B. No. 1408
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Higher Education & Technology, to which was referred H.B. No. 1408 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered population in the State; and
- (2) Appropriate funds.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; University of Hawai'i System; Broadband Hui; Ho'ike Kauai Community Television; Kapolei Chamber of Commerce; Hawaiian Telcom; Kula no na Po'e Hawaii o Papakolea, Kewalo, Kalawahine; and three individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from The Civil Beat Law Center for the Public Interest and Hawaii Chapter Society of Professional Journalists. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Office of Information Practices.

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Your Committee finds that digital equity is essential to the well-being and economic vitality of the State's residents. The coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic revealed that reliable high-speed internet access is not only important for remote learning and remote work, but also critical for telehealth services and commerce. Through the award of grants promoting digital equity, this measure would help to create an environment in which all individuals in the State have the information technology capacity needed for their full participation in society, democracy, and the economy.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Removing from the confidential treatment of applications provision, language that would except from public disclosure information that comprises commercially sensitive information, as unnecessarily vague and broad and otherwise already protected by state law;
- (2) Changing the effective date to June 30, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Should your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce decide to hear this measure, your Committee requests that it consider blanking out the appropriation amounts and inserting the requested amounts into its committee report for consideration by your Committee on Finance.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Higher Education & Technology that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1408, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1408, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Higher Education &
Technology,



AMY A. PERRU^{SO}, Chair



