

MAR 07 2014

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE HAWAII ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AN EDUCATIONAL LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM FOR WILLIAM S. RICHARDSON SCHOOL OF LAW GRADUATES TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES TO PURSUE PUBLIC INTEREST CAREERS IN HAWAII THAT DIRECTLY SERVE UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.

1 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that there is a significant,
2 and income-based disparity in the ability of Hawaii residents to
3 meaningfully achieve justice in both the civil and criminal
4 courts of the State; and

5
6 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Supreme Court's Access to Justice
7 Commission, established in 2008 to increase access to justice in
8 civil legal matters for low- and moderate-income residents,
9 found that one of the reasons for the severe disparity among
10 citizens' abilities to access the judicial system is the
11 insufficient number of attorneys choosing to practice public
12 interest law in Hawaii; and

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14 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that there are not enough
15 new lawyers that are able to practice public interest law due to
16 accumulated educational debt incurred, the high cost of living
17 in Hawaii, and the low compensation for public interest work
18 compared to other practice areas; and

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20 WHEREAS, the legislature further finds that the federal
21 government and 26 other jurisdictions nationwide have loan
22 repayment assistance programs to encourage lawyers to pursue
23 public interest work within their jurisdictions; and

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25 WHEREAS, there are several available options that could
26 achieve an effective Hawaii-focused loan repayment program, and
27 such a program is necessary to bring similar benefits to the
28 State's underserved communities; and



1 WHEREAS, the William S. Richardson School of Law has served
2 as Hawaii's law school since 1973 and provides an excellent
3 legal education for attorneys pursuing all sectors of law, with
4 an emphasis on public service and public interest law that,
5 compared to law school education elsewhere in the United States,
6 provides a relatively low cost and high value legal education
7 that allows Hawaii residents the opportunity to pursue a
8 rewarding legal career in-State; and

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10 WHEREAS, many students of the William S. Richardson School
11 of Law express a high level of interest in pursuing public
12 service careers in Hawaii, including in the State's rural
13 communities, and a loan repayment program would be a substantial
14 factor in enabling Richardson graduates to pursue these careers;
15 and

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17 WHEREAS, many underserved communities in Hawaii would
18 benefit directly from a loan repayment program that supports
19 graduates of the William S. Richardson School of Law pursuing
20 public interest careers; and

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22 WHEREAS, a successful loan repayment program needs to be
23 crafted carefully to:

- 24
25 (1) Ensure maximum compatibility with the federal
26 repayment program;
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28 (2) Ensure broad support from law students and graduates,
29 the Judiciary, the Hawaii State Bar Association, and
30 the State's public service providers;
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32 (3) Be financially sustainable; and
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34 (4) Include a collection program that provides for
35 appropriate administrative support through the William
36 S. Richardson School of Law, but avoids conflicts of
37 interest with respect to its graduates; now,
38 therefore,

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40 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-seventh
41 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2014, the
42 House of Representatives concurring, that the Hawaii Access to
43 Justice Commission is requested to convene a working group to
44 develop an educational loan repayment program for William S.



1 Richardson School of Law graduates to expand opportunities to
2 pursue public interest careers in Hawaii for the benefit of
3 underserved communities; and

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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be composed
6 of members of the Hawaii Access to Justice Commission, faculty
7 and staff of the William S. Richardson School of Law, the
8 Student Bar Association of the William S. Richardson School of
9 Law, the Alumni Association of the William S. Richardson School
10 of Law, the Hawaii State Bar Association, a retired member of
11 the Hawaii Supreme Court, Hawaii Consortium of Legal Service
12 Providers, Hawaii Justice Foundation, a member of the House of
13 Representatives, a member of the Senate, and a representative of
14 the Governor's Office; and

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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
17 to:

- 18
19 (1) Explore alternative methods of encouraging law
20 graduates to pursue public interest careers that
21 provide legal services directly to underserved
22 communities and nonprofit organizations;
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24 (2) Consider the compatibility of the federal law graduate
25 loan repayment programs with a Hawaii program;
26
27 (3) Consider the establishment of an incubator program for
28 post-graduate apprenticeship to afford practice-ready
29 training for graduates of the William S. Richardson
30 School of Law and to encourage multidisciplinary
31 training of graduates; and
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33 (4) Draft proposed legislation or alternative measures, if
34 needed, to implement such programs; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the working
37 group should not be considered state employees based solely upon
38 their participation in the working group; and
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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
41 to submit a final report of the working group's findings and
42 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
43 Legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the
44 Regular Session of 2015; and



S.C.R. NO. 116

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Chief
3 Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court, members of the Hawaii
4 Access to Justice Commission, the Dean of the William S.
5 Richardson School of Law, the President of the Student Bar
6 Association of the William S. Richardson School of Law, the
7 President of the Alumni Association of the William S. Richardson
8 School of Law, the Executive Director of the Hawaii State Bar
9 Association, members of the Hawaii Consortium of Legal Service
10 Providers, and the Commissioners of the Hawaii Justice
11 Foundation.
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OFFERED BY:

