REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA JOHN A. BURNS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE TO CONDUCT A STUDY THAT INVESTIGATES THE PREVALENCE OF THE RS-12252-C VARIATION OF THE IFITM3 GENE AMONG HAWAII'S ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER RESIDENTS AND THE SEVERITY OF VIRAL INFECTION COMPARED TO RESIDENTS OF OTHER ETHNICITIES.

WHEREAS, in addition to factors such as nutrition, underlying disease, and immunity to past infection, a person's genetic predisposition can contribute to the severity of infection that person experiences; and

WHEREAS, research shows that mutations to the IFITM3 gene, such as the RS-12252-C variation, can lead to complications during the course of certain infections, such as various forms of influenza and other respiratory infections; and

WHEREAS, a study of the impacts of the 2009 H1N1 virus found that sixty-nine percent of patients with severe H1N1 symptoms carried the RS-12252-C variation, while only twenty-five percent of patients with mild symptoms carried the variation; and

WHEREAS, the RS-12252-C variation occurs in approximately twenty-five percent of persons of Chinese descent and forty-four percent of persons of Japanese descent, but in only eight percent of persons of European or sub-Saharan African descent; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization declared that the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic has disproportionately affected the Asian and Pacific Islander population of the State, according to Department of Health statistics; and
WHEREAS, despite the particular susceptibility of persons of Asian descent to carrying the RS-12252-C variation and the approximately thirty-eight percent of Hawaii residents who are of Asian descent, which is more than any other State in the country, no studies have been conducted regarding the prevalence of the RS-12252-C variation of the IFITM3 gene among those residents; and

WHEREAS, this lack of scientific study leaves the Department of Health with no knowledge as to how this genetic variation could affect Hawaii in the event of a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, data suggests that the RS-12252-C variation may increase the likelihood of developing more serious complications as a result of a COVID-19 infection; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, the Senate concurring, that the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine is requested to conduct a study that investigates the prevalence of the RS-12252-C variation of the IFITM3 gene among Asian and Pacific Islander residents and the severity of viral infection compared to residents of other ethnicities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study should be conducted on the deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA, of those residents to determine the severity of risk that the carrier of an RS-12252-C variation will contract serious COVID-19 and other certain dangerous influenza viral infections; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine is requested to submit a report of its findings to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2022; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is requested to incorporate the research findings from the John A. Burns School of Medicine regarding the RS-12252-C variation of the IFITM3 gene into its public health and pandemic planning; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health and Dean of the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine.

OFFERED BY:  

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