HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE, 2021
STATE OF HAWAII

H.R. NO. 69

HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM TO ESTABLISH A JOB CORPS PROGRAM TO HELP ADDRESS UNEMPLOYMENT IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND SUPPORT ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION.

WHEREAS, the federal Job Corps program is a no-cost education and career technical training program administered by the United States Department of Labor that helps young people ages sixteen to twenty-four improve the quality of their lives through career technical and academic training; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Job Corps Center supports the Job Corps program's mission to teach eligible young people the skills they need to become employable and independent and place them in meaningful jobs or further their education; and

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hawaii had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the pandemic has placed tens of thousands of residents out of work and Hawaii now has among the nation's highest rates of unemployment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations reported that in September 2019, Hawaii had a seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 2.7 percent, compared to a national unemployment rate of 3.5 percent, and a year later, in September 2020, Hawaii's unemployment rate was 15.1 percent, compared to a national unemployment rate of 7.9 percent; and

WHEREAS, these figures highlight the need for increased and diverse workforce development initiatives; and

WHEREAS, tourism, the State's largest industry, has dropped considerably because of the pandemic, providing a unique
opportunity to build a more resilient, equitable, and
diversified economy; and

WHEREAS, the Civilian Conservation Corps established after
the Great Depression was a federal work relief program to help
employ Americans on conservation projects, alleviate economic
distress, and support the protection and responsible development
of natural resources and agricultural use; and

WHEREAS, the State is mandated to be powered by one hundred
percent renewable energy and to sequester more carbon than the
State emits by 2045; and

WHEREAS, the State is also mandated to transition cesspools
to septic systems by 2050; and

WHEREAS, to support a comprehensive economic recovery, the
State must invest in our community and emerging economic sectors
and provide residents with the education and training
opportunities needed to succeed; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a state-run job corps program
would provide residents of all ages who have been economically
impacted by the pandemic with opportunities to learn new skills
and increase their prospects of employment within resiliency and
green sectors, including local agriculture, conservation,
climate adaptation, renewable energy, cesspool conversion, and
technology; and

WHEREAS, Aloha Connects Innovation and Kupu 'Āina Corps are
two workforce development initiatives launched by the State with
Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act
funds, and serve as examples the State can integrate and build
upon in establishing its own job corps program; and

WHEREAS, "From Today to Tomorrow: A Talent Roadmap to
Support Economic Recovery" by the Hawaii Executive
Collaborative, provides a framework to establish a job corps
program by outlining a talent development strategy through
expanding work-based learning, retraining, credentialing
programs, industry-driven solutions, and partnerships; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism is urged to establish a job corps program to help address unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support economic diversification; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism consult with and seek advice from the Workforce Development Council in its efforts to establish the program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism identify public-private partnerships and outline components of a job corps program that focuses on resiliency and green sector jobs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2022 Regular Session on the Department's recommendations on funding sources and program structure for the job corps program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; and Chair of the Workforce Development Council.

OFFERED BY:  

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