SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING TO FORM A WORKING GROUP AND DEVELOP A PLAN FOR OUTREACH TO KUPUNA TO REMEDIATE A LACK OF DIGITAL LITERACY, BROADBAND ACCESS, AND COMPUTER EQUIPMENT.

WHEREAS, access to broadband connectivity is a foundation for improved economic growth, job creation, global competitiveness, and a better way of life; and

WHEREAS, in March 2020, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in the State, upending all that residents knew as normal; in response, the Governor was joined by the mayors of all four counties in mandating restrictions and policies on operations, travel between the islands, and work-from-home policies; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and its broad, adverse economic impact underscored that improved access to broadband services across all communities in Hawaii would enhance economic development, education, healthcare, public safety, and emergency services in those communities; and

WHEREAS, broadband connectivity was once considered a luxury commodity, but the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that stable internet access is a necessity for a productive, modern life and a lifeline in the event of an emergency; and

WHEREAS, thousands of residents in the State were forced to function from their homes and rely on the quality of their internet connections for access to virtual communications; and

WHEREAS, having basic technical capabilities in digital literacy is a necessity to access the potential of broadband connectivity and the internet; and

WHEREAS, members of our community, such as our kupuna, homeless population, and recently released prisoners, often lack the digital skills necessary to fully utilize newer, current technologies to discover career and other social support.
opportunities, which may be found online and are especially
critical during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, kupuna are eager for opportunities to learn about
technologies that would facilitate their aging independently,
have a desire to understand and control their data (as privacy
is also important to them), and it is estimated that more than
half of people sixty-five years or older are smartphone owners;
and

WHEREAS, the rapid and constant advancement of technology
often makes older adults unsure of their ability to use it,
which can leave them unmotivated and lacking in the self-
confidence to utilize technology in their everyday life; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Office on Aging (EOA) is the
designated lead agency in the coordination of a statewide system
of aging and caregiver support services in the State; now,
therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021,
that the EOA is encouraged to study and identify the number of
kupuna in the State who struggle with digital literacy, lack
broadband access, and lack computer equipment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the EOA is encouraged to form a
working group to develop a plan for outreach to kupuna to
remediate a lack of digital literacy, and to develop a
curriculum to increase digital literacy among Hawai‘i’s kupuna
community; provided that it is also requested that the Director
of the EOA, or their designee, lead the working group, and it is
suggested that the group consist of other governmental agencies,
organizations, and subject matter experts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the EOA is urged to partner
with nonprofit groups that work toward increasing digital
literacy and access for kupuna and other unserved or underserved
communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the EOA is requested to submit
a report of its findings and plan for remediation, including any
proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and Director of the Executive Office on Aging.

OFFERED BY: [Signature]