HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE, 2020
STATE OF HAWAII

H.R. NO. 54

HOUSE RESOLUTION

ESTABLISHING THE SELECT HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COVID-19 ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS.

WHEREAS, a virus named "SARS-CoV-2" causes a disease named the "2019 novel coronavirus", or COVID-19, which since January 2020, has been at the center of an outbreak of respiratory disease first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern" and recently raised its prediction of the global spread of the virus to "very high"; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Secretary declared a public health emergency for the United States to aid the nation's health care community in responding to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 may deeply impact Hawaii's economy due to the State's proximity to Asia and reliance on the tourism industry and imported goods; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism reported a 7.3 percent drop in international passengers to the State in February 2020, and also estimated a loss of over $23 million in visitor expenditures; and

WHEREAS, due to the heavy reliance on tourism and imported goods, the State must prepare for the economic and financial impact on Hawaii's residents, businesses, and governmental operations; and

WHEREAS, during the Great Recession of 2008, the State was faced with a $2.1 billion shortfall; and

WHEREAS, to account for the loss from the Great Recession of 2008, state government had to implement several difficult decisions including:

(1) Reducing the school week to four days through furlough Fridays;

(2) Cutting millions of dollars for critical mental health, adult dental, social service, housing, homeless, and environmental programs; and

(3) Reducing public employees' salaries by five percent; and

WHEREAS, ensuring the health and safety of people of the State is imperative, but the State must also work to secure Hawaii's economy and financial viability going forward; and

WHEREAS, the State must be prepared to take immediate action in the event that a statewide COVID-19 outbreak occurs to ensure that Hawaii is prepared and able to handle the effects of an epidemic in our State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, that there is established the Select House Committee on COVID-19 Economic and Financial Preparedness, to work with representatives from local and state government, private industry, and nonprofit agencies and organizations, to inform the House of Representatives on the State's economic and financial preparedness in the event that a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Select Committee shall examine economic and financial issues including:

(1) Identifying the potential economic and financial impact to the State;

(2) Developing short-term and long-term mitigation plans; and

(3) Monitoring COVID-19 conditions and outcomes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Speaker of the House of Representatives appoint the chair and members of the Select Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Select Committee meet and report on a regular basis to the House of Representatives.

OFFERED BY: _____