
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS TO CONDUCT A
FEASIBILITY STUDY ON ESTABLISHING A STATEWIDE CENTRALIZED
LANGUAGE ACCESS RESOURCE CENTER.

1 WHEREAS, for many people in Hawai'i, English is not their
2 primary language, and they have only a limited ability to read,
3 write, speak, or understand English; and
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5 WHEREAS, according to the 2000 census, nearly two hundred
6 ninety thousand people, or twenty-four per cent of Hawaii's
7 population, speak a language other than English at home,
8 including more than two hundred fifty thousand people who speak
9 an Asian or Pacific Island language; and
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11 WHEREAS, for persons who are limited English proficient,
12 language barriers prohibit them from fully participating in the
13 community and can undermine their ability to be self-sufficient
14 and productive; and
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16 WHEREAS, the legislature enacted Act 290, Session Laws of
17 Hawaii 2006, codified as part of chapter 371, Hawaii Revised
18 Statutes, to address the language access needs of limited
19 English proficient persons by, among other things, requiring
20 each state agency to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful
21 access by limited English proficient persons to services,
22 programs, and activities funded and provided by the State; and
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24 WHEREAS, as the lead agency for the State in this regard,
25 the department of labor and industrial relations plays a
26 critical role; and
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28 WHEREAS, all state agencies and other covered entities are
29 required to establish a plan for language access to provide

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1 equal, meaningful access to essential government services, such
 2 as social services, job training, employment assistance, fair
 3 and impartial hearings, and emergency assistance, to all of
 4 Hawaii's diverse population regardless of their primary
 5 language; and
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7 WHEREAS, as of December 2007, plans for twenty-three out of
 8 twenty-five state agencies and forty covered entities were
 9 completed; and
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11 WHEREAS, as the implementation of the plans approaches, two
 12 major stumbling blocks hinder meaningful access to essential
 13 government services for persons who are limited English
 14 proficient. First, there is no comprehensive system in Hawaii
 15 to identify language interpreters and translators and to refer
 16 interpreters or translators to the state agencies and other
 17 covered entities seeking assistance. Second, there is a lack of
 18 trained and certified language interpreters and translators who
 19 can meet the demand to assist limited English proficient persons
 20 in a timely, meaningful manner; now, therefore,
 21

22 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 23 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
 24 Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the Office of
 25 Language Access under the department of labor and industrial
 26 relations, State of Hawaii, is requested to conduct a
 27 feasibility study on establishing a statewide centralized
 28 language access resource center. The study will include a
 29 survey of existing language resources as well as the language
 30 service needs and costs of state agencies and covered entities.
 31 In addition, it will include an analysis of the functions of a
 32 language resource center, including, but not limited to, the
 33 following:
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- 35 (1) Compiling and maintaining a roster of available
 36 language interpreters and translators;
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- 38 (2) Coordinating training programs to increase the
 39 availability of qualified language interpreters and translators;
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1 (3) Matching and referring qualified language interpreters
2 and translators to the needs of state agencies and other covered
3 entities seeking assistance;

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5 (4) Training state employees in positions of public
6 contact that are first to respond to limited English proficient
7 customers who seek to access state-funded services, programs,
8 and activities;

9
10 (5) Developing the office's capacity and resources to
11 assist state agencies with their language services needs in the
12 future; and

13
14 (6) Standardizing the testing and certification of
15 language interpreters and translators to ensure the quality and
16 accuracy of their services; and

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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of language access
19 shall submit a written report to the legislature of its findings
20 and recommendations, including a proposed budget, no later than
21 twenty days prior to the convening of the 2009 regular session;
22 and

23
24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
25 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Executive Director
26 of the Office of Language Access and the Director of the
27 Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, State of Hawaii.

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OFFERED BY:

John M. M. [Signature]

(By Request)

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