
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

DECLARING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER OF EACH YEAR AS LANGUAGE ACCESS
MONTH IN HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42
2 United States Code, Section 2000d) provides that "no person in
3 the United States, on the grounds of race, color, or national
4 origin, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the
5 benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program
6 or activity receiving Federal financial assistance"; and
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8 WHEREAS, according to the 2000 United States Census,
9 approximately twenty-four per cent of Hawaii's population speak
10 a language other than English at home, including over two
11 hundred fifty thousand persons who speak an Asian or Pacific
12 Island language; and
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14 WHEREAS, for the percentage of Hawaii's population for whom
15 English is not their primary language and who have identified
16 themselves as having limited English proficiency, a language
17 barrier often prohibits them from fully participating in the
18 community and undermines their efforts to become self-sufficient
19 and productive; and
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21 WHEREAS, in 2006, the Legislature acknowledged that
22 language is a barrier for individuals with limited proficiency
23 in English and enacted Act 290, Session Laws of Hawaii 2006,
24 which was codified as sections 371-31 through 371-37, Hawaii
25 Revised Statutes, also known as Hawaii's language access law;
26 and
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28 WHEREAS, Hawaii's language access law seeks to eliminate
29 language barriers by requiring every state agency and any person
30 or organization that receives state funding and provides
31 services to the public on behalf of the State to "take
32 reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to services,



1 programs, and activities by limited English proficient persons,"
2 free of charge and regardless of what language the person
3 speaks; and
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5 WHEREAS, Hawaii's language access law also established the
6 Office of Language Access in the Department of Labor and
7 Industrial Relations to provide oversight, coordination, and
8 technical assistance to state agencies and state-funded entities
9 and to review and monitor each state agency's language access
10 compliance plan; and
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12 WHEREAS, despite the education, training, and community
13 outreach activities conducted by the office of language access,
14 many Hawaii residents are still unaware of the language access
15 law and of the daily challenges faced by persons of limited
16 English proficiency, especially in instances when, for example:
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- 18 (1) A patient goes to a medical appointment and the doctor
19 speaks only English and the patient speaks Chinese;
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21 (2) A state social worker meets with a client applying for
22 food stamps and the social worker speaks English and
23 Ilocano and the client speaks Marshallese; or
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25 (3) A public school nurse calls home about a child with a
26 fever and the child's mother speaks Korean but not
27 English; and
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29 WHEREAS, ongoing education efforts are needed to ensure
30 that language access becomes a normal process that is accepted
31 in the provision of state government services; and
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33 WHEREAS, a month dedicated to the promotion of language
34 access and information dissemination about the requirements and
35 benefits of Hawaii's language access laws would advance the goal
36 of equal access and full participation of persons of limited
37 English proficiency; now, therefore,
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39 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
40 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
41 Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the month of
42 September of this year and each succeeding year is declared to
43 be language access month in Hawaii to raise awareness of the

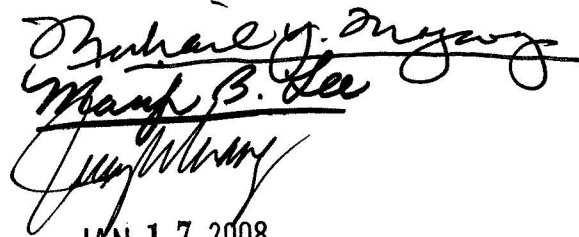
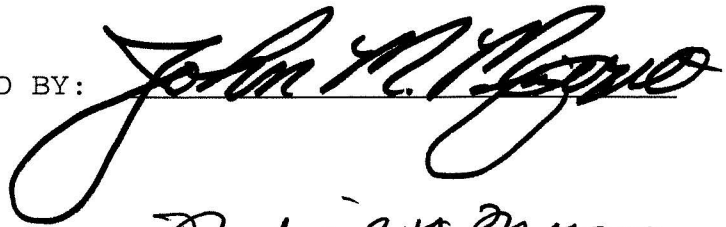


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1 state language access laws and the provision of equal access to
2 state and state-funded government services; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
5 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and each
6 member of Hawaii's congressional delegation.
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OFFERED BY:



JAN 17 2008

