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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there is a need to  
2 require the department of education to fully fund the Hawaiian  
3 language medium education program, also known as the Hawaiian  
4 language immersion program, in the public schools.

5           The legislature finds that article XV, section 4 of the  
6 Constitution of the State of Hawaii establishes Hawaiian and  
7 English as the official languages of the State. The preamble to  
8 the constitution proclaims: "We, the people of Hawaii, grateful  
9 for Divine Guidance, and mindful of our Hawaiian heritage and  
10 uniqueness as an island State, dedicate our efforts to fulfill  
11 the philosophy decreed by the Hawaii State motto, 'Ua mau ke ea  
12 o ka aina i ka pono.'" Moreover, article X, section 4 of the  
13 Constitution of the State of Hawaii requires the State to  
14 promote the study of Hawaiian culture, history, and language and  
15 mandates that the State provide for a Hawaiian education  
16 program. The legislature finds that the department of  
17 education's Hawaiian language medium education program has a  
18 central role to play in ensuring the perpetuation of Hawaiian



1 culture, history, language, values, and practices consistent  
2 with the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.

3 Further, the legislature finds that, despite the central  
4 positions accorded to the Hawaiian language and Hawaiian  
5 language education in the Constitution of the State of Hawaii,  
6 the department of education's Hawaiian language immersion  
7 program is woefully under-funded and under-resourced. As  
8 currently implemented within the department, Hawaiian language  
9 immersion programs in the public schools have experienced severe  
10 budget cuts, teacher firings, the shifting of teaching and  
11 instructional positions from Hawaiian language immersion  
12 programs to English language medium instruction programs,  
13 inadequate provision of curriculum and classroom materials,  
14 including supplementary instructional books and materials, and  
15 the imposition of culturally and linguistically inappropriate  
16 assessment instruments on students and school-based Hawaiian  
17 language immersion programs.

18 The legislature also finds that, for far too many of the  
19 department's Hawaiian language immersion programs, the  
20 department's intensive focus on subjects tested under the  
21 federal No Child Left Behind Act regulations has led to a  
22 diminishment of resources assigned to the study of the Hawaiian



1 language, including adequate recruitment and retention of  
2 qualified teachers for the program. Years of inadequate funding  
3 for the program have resulted in severely reduced student  
4 enrollments in many Hawaiian language immersion programs  
5 statewide, widespread use of the practice of clustering multiple  
6 grade levels in one classroom, severe teacher shortages, and the  
7 current failure of the majority of Hawaiian language immersion  
8 program students to achieve adequate yearly progress in their  
9 academic studies. Due primarily to the historically low levels  
10 of funding and resources support, the department's  
11 implementation of the program has seriously compromised its  
12 ability to fulfill its constitutional, ethical, and educational  
13 mandates to Hawaii's students and to the host culture. Thus,  
14 the legislature finds that the Hawaiian language immersion  
15 program requires full funding and resources support from the  
16 department to maintain its academic viability and cultural  
17 richness.

18       Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the  
19 board of education to fully fund the Hawaiian language immersion  
20 program, including full funding for teacher positions in each  
21 grade level and in each academic teaching specialty in all of



1 the Hawaiian language immersion programs in the department of  
2 education.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
5 and to read as follows:

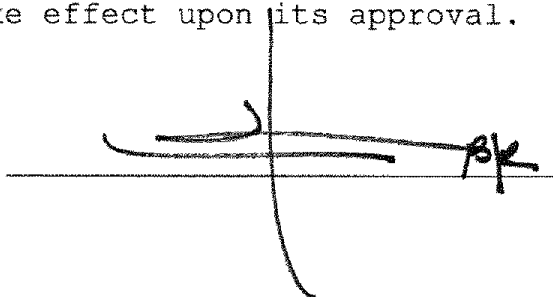
6 "§302A- Funding of immersion programs. The board of  
7 education shall fully fund all of the department of education's  
8 Hawaiian language immersion programs, including but not limited  
9 to full funding for teacher positions in each grade level and in  
10 each academic teaching specialty in all of the Hawaiian language  
11 immersion programs in the department of education."

12 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

13 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

14

INTRODUCED BY:





**Report Title:**

BOE; Hawaiian Language; Hawaiian Language Immersion Program

**Description:**

Requires the board of education to fully fund the Hawaiian language immersion program.

