

FEB 28 2008

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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE LEGISLATURE TO DECLARE SEPTEMBER AS LANGUAGE ACCESS  
MONTH.

1           WHEREAS, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42  
2 U.S.C. §2000d ("Title VI"), provides that "[n]o person in the  
3 United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national  
4 origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit  
5 of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or  
6 activity receiving Federal financial assistance."; and

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8           WHEREAS, according to the 2000 Census, two hundred ninety  
9 thousand of Hawaii's 1,200,000 people, or approximately twenty-  
10 four per cent of the population, speak a language other than  
11 English at home, including over two hundred fifty thousand  
12 persons who speak an Asian or Pacific Island language; and

13  
14           WHEREAS, for this portion of Hawaii's population for whom  
15 English is not their primary language and who have identified  
16 themselves as having limited English proficiency ("LEP"),  
17 language is a barrier that often prohibits them from fully  
18 participating in the community and undermines their efforts to  
19 become self-sufficient and productive; and

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21           WHEREAS, in 2006, the Legislature recognized and  
22 acknowledged that language is a barrier for LEP individuals  
23 living in Hawaii and enacted Hawaii's language access law, Act  
24 290, Session Laws of Hawaii 2006, later codified as sections  
25 371-31 to 371-37, Hawaii Revised Statutes; and

26  
27           WHEREAS, Hawaii's language access law seeks to breakdown  
28 language barriers by requiring every state agency, and any  
29 organization that receives state funding and provides services  
30 to the public, to "take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful  
31 access to services, programs, and activities by limited English  
32 proficient persons," free of charge and regardless of what  
33 language is spoken; and



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2 WHEREAS, as a result of Hawaii's language access law, the  
3 Office of Language Access was established to promote equal  
4 access and full participation for persons with limited English  
5 proficiency through oversight, coordination, and technical  
6 assistance to state and state-funded entities and by reviewing  
7 and monitoring language access plans; and

8  
9 WHEREAS, the Office of Language Access has promoted  
10 language access through education and training to state agencies  
11 and state-funded entities and through outreach to the general  
12 public at community events and conferences, and in public  
13 service announcements; and

14  
15 WHEREAS, many residents in Hawaii are still unaware of the  
16 language access law and of the everyday challenges faced by  
17 limited English proficient persons, such as when a patient who  
18 speaks only Chinese comes in for an appointment with a doctor  
19 who speaks only English, when a state social worker who speaks  
20 English and Ilokano meets with a client applying for food stamps  
21 who speaks only Marshallese, or when a public school nurse who  
22 speaks English calls home about a child with a fever and speaks  
23 to the child's mother who only speaks Korean; and

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25 WHEREAS, ongoing education and efforts are needed to ensure  
26 that language access becomes the "norm" in the provision of  
27 government services; and

28  
29 WHEREAS, declaring a month dedicated to the promotion of  
30 language access, will allow the Office of Language Access, in  
31 conjunction with community organizations, to showcase the  
32 language access law, its requirements, and its benefits; now,  
33 therefore,

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35 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth  
36 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the  
37 House of Representatives concurring, that September 2008 is  
38 designated as Language Access Month to raise awareness of the  
39 language access laws and the provision of equal access to state  
40 and state-funded government services; and



S.C.R. NO. 67

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
2 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor of the  
3 State of Hawaii and Hawaii's congressional delegation.  
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OFFERED BY:

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