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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii is a melting  
2 pot of diverse nationalities and cultures. Diversity defines  
3 Hawaii's residents and makes this State a unique place to live.

4           The legislature also finds that according to the 2000  
5 United States Census, over twelve per cent of the State's  
6 residents speak English "less than very well". These residents  
7 face daily challenges, whether it is struggling to consult with  
8 a school counselor about their child's performance at school or  
9 seeking to understand a notice regarding public housing  
10 benefits.

11           The legislature finds that as only one of four states to  
12 enact a statewide law on language access, Hawaii is on the  
13 leading edge of breaking down language barriers to enable its  
14 diverse population, particularly persons who are limited in  
15 their English language proficiency, to gain equal access to much  
16 needed government services at no extra charge. Whether the  
17 State provides access to its services and programs through an  
18 interpreter or translates key documents needed to access its



1 services, residents with limited English proficiency benefit by  
2 being able to fully participate in the community as self-  
3 sufficient and productive members of the community.

4 The legislature finds that ongoing education and efforts  
5 are needed to ensure that language access becomes the "norm" in  
6 the provision of government services.

7 The purpose of this Act is to designate the month of  
8 September as "Language Access Month" for the promotion of  
9 language access in Hawaii, to emphasize the importance of and  
10 need for language access in our multicultural society, and to  
11 raise public awareness of language access for government  
12 services.

13 SECTION 2. Chapter 8, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended  
14 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to  
15 read as follows:

16 "§8- Language access month. The month of September  
17 shall be known and designated as "language access month" to  
18 promote awareness of language access for government services and  
19 to emphasize the importance of and need for language access in  
20 Hawaii's diverse society. This month is not and shall not be  
21 construed as a state holiday."

22 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.



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

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INTRODUCED BY: ~~SEN. SC. Kuchala~~

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**Report Title:**

Holidays; Language Access Month

**Description:**

Designates the month of September as "language access month" to promote awareness of language access for government services and to emphasize the importance of and the need for language access in Hawaii.

