

SCR 135



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
1390 Miller Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

March 31, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S.C.R. 135 – REQUESTING A STUDY ON THE AVAILABILITY  
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS**

Hearing: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 1:15 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

**PURPOSE:** This resolution requests the Legislative Reference Bureau to conduct a study to determine what barriers exist to securing more community interpreting hours.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services supports S.C.R. 135 requesting a study on the availability of American Sign Language interpreters.

The study will assist the Department to determine the extent of the interpreter shortage and identify possible solutions to decrease the shortage. Deaf and hard of hearing persons need interpreters to meet their special communication needs that impact all areas of their lives. Their unique communication needs affect language development, understanding of social situations, budgeting, housing, transportation

and more. These areas also have a critical impact on education and training related to employment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

FRANCINE MAE LEHUANANI AONA KENYON  
2520 Jasmine Street  
Honolulu, HI 96816

March 31, 2009 at 1:15 pm

Conference Room 016

**SCR 135, REQUESTING A STUDY**

**ON THE AVAILABILITY OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS**

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Senator Les Ihara, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Francine Mae Lehuanani Aona Kenyon. I am in support of SCR 135, requesting a study on the availability of American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters as an avid deaf advocate with many hats because of three major reasons: (1) compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); (2) Lack of availability of ASL Interpreters; and (3) financial concerns.

We have already faced the shortage of American Sign Language Interpreters in the state but this study will help us resolve the problems by increasing the number of ASL interpreters and promoting the job opportunities with benefits to ASL students.

My daughter-in-law took American Sign Language in lieu of foreign languages at her high school where she and my son graduated the same year. St. Francis School for Girls in Honolulu offers American Sign Language courses as part of foreign language for graduation. So why not offer American Sign Language vclasses at high schools in lieu of foreign language as graduation requirement so that more high school graduates could go on to Kapiolani Community College Interpreter Education Program and prepare themselves to take the certification or credential exams.

I myself am volunteering as ASL interpreter but I am not yet certified as Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)

Mahalo for your consideration on this study.

Sincerely,

Francine Mae Lehuanani Aona Kenyon

Ken H. Takayama  
Director

Charlotte A. Carter-Yamauchi  
First Assistant

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LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU  
State of Hawaii  
State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 446  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Testimony

## SCR135

### REQUESTING A STUDY ON THE AVAILABILITY OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

Testimony by the Legislative Reference Bureau  
Ken H. Takayama, Director

Presented to the Senate Committee on Human Services

Tuesday, March 31, 2009, 1:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 016

Chair Chun Oakland and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ken H. Takayama, Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on Senate Committee Resolution No. 135. The Bureau takes **no position** either for or against this measure, but offers the following **comments**:

1. The Committee Report directs the Bureau to do a study to determine:
  - a. Whether existing laws, rules, or policies constitute barriers to people's willingness to work as American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters; and
  - b. Changes that can be implemented to increase the availability of interpreters.
2. As presently drafted, the scope of the study requested appears to be manageable.
3. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.