

JAN 21 2010

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

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

1 WHEREAS, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters work as  
2 freelance interpreters to provide communication access between  
3 hearing and deaf or hard of hearing individuals; and  
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5 WHEREAS, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the  
6 Blind Division of the Department of Human Services and the  
7 Disability and Communication Access Board prepared a report  
8 entitled "Shortage of ASL-English Interpreters in the State of  
9 Hawaii" in November 2000; and  
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11 WHEREAS, the 2000 report identified job security,  
12 consistency of income, stability of schedule, benefits, and  
13 professional development as priorities for working interpreters;  
14 and  
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16 WHEREAS, the 2000 report recommended increasing the pool of  
17 qualified interpreters in Hawaii to improve communication access  
18 for deaf and hard of hearing persons; and  
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20 WHEREAS, the Disability and Communication Access Board is a  
21 state agency that issues administrative rules for the  
22 utilization of communication access services (e.g., sign  
23 language interpreters, real-time captioners, and computer-  
24 assisted notetakers) and determines the qualifications of  
25 interpreters and the credentialing of interpreters who do not  
26 hold national certification via a state screening process; and  
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28 WHEREAS, the Disability and Communication Access Board has  
29 developed and implements a state test, the Hawaii Quality  
30 Assurance System (HQAS), for individuals who wish to obtain a  
31 state credential to work as an ASL sign language interpreter in  
32 the State of Hawaii but who do not seek national certification;  
33 and  
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1           WHEREAS, on average, only eight to twelve individuals per  
2 year take and pass the Disability and Communication Access Board  
3 HQAS test; and

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5           WHEREAS, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the  
6 Blind Division has contracted for statewide interpreter referral  
7 services with a private agency, Hawaii Interpreting Services,  
8 LLC, which has experienced significant difficulty in securing  
9 ASL interpreters for community freelance interpreting  
10 assignments; and

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12           WHEREAS, state agencies, especially agencies that are heavy  
13 users of interpreter services, such as the Vocational  
14 Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division of the  
15 Department of Human Services and the University of Hawaii, are  
16 also having difficulty meeting their obligations to provide  
17 communication access to deaf and hard of hearing individuals;  
18 and

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20           WHEREAS, the lack of ASL interpreters seriously impacts the  
21 lives of persons who are deaf in obtaining and maintaining jobs,  
22 affecting their health, safety, and interactions of daily life;  
23 and

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25           WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii has an Interpreter Education  
26 and Training Program at Kapiolani Community College whose  
27 purpose, in part, is to train students to become working  
28 interpreters to increase the pool of available ASL interpreters  
29 in the State of Hawaii; and

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31           WHEREAS, although the Kapiolani Community College  
32 Interpreter Education and Training Program has offered many  
33 classes to individuals who have increased their proficiency in  
34 ASL and has promoted the advancement of educational assistants  
35 in the school system with sign language interpreting skills, the  
36 number of graduates who have become working freelance  
37 interpreters has not increased in the community; now, therefore,

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39           BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth  
40 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010,  
41 that the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to conduct a  
42 study to determine what barriers (rates, benefits, reimbursement  
43 mechanisms, etc.) in existing law, rules, regulations, or



1 policies exist to securing more ASL community interpreting  
2 hours; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disability and  
5 Communication Access Board and Hawaii Interpreting Services,  
6 LLC, are requested to assist the Legislative Reference Bureau in  
7 surveying ASL interpreters currently working in the State of  
8 Hawaii; and

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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study provide  
11 recommendations as to statutory changes that might be enacted  
12 and administrative or program changes that might be implemented  
13 to increase the availability of ASL interpreters, including but  
14 not limited to changes in areas such as:

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- 16 (1) The Disability and Communication Access Board;
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- 18 (2) Title 11, chapter 218, Hawaii Administrative Rules;
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- 20 (3) The HQAS test;
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- 22 (4) The Kapiolani Community College Interpreter Education  
23 and Training Program; and
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- 25 (5) The Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the  
26 Blind Division Interpreter Referral Contract; and
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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference  
30 Bureau is requested to consult with the Disability and  
31 Communication Access Board, the Vocational Rehabilitation and  
32 Services for the Blind Division, Kapiolani Community College  
33 Interpreter Education Program, Hawaii Interpreting Services,  
34 LLC, Hawaii Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Purple  
35 Communications, and user groups of ASL interpreting services in  
36 formulating recommendations; and

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38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference  
39 Bureau submit its findings and recommendations to the  
40 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
41 the 2011 Regular Session; and

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43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
44 Resolution be transmitted to the Executive Director of the  
Disability and Communication Access Board, the Administrator of



1 the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind  
2 Division, the Chancellor of the Kapiolani Community College, the  
3 Hawaii Interpreting Services, LLC, the Administrator of the  
4 Hawaii Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and the Director  
5 of the Legislative Reference Bureau.

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OFFERED BY: Shianne Chun Oakland

