
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;
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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 adopts 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, if any; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
5 Bureau is requested to conduct a survey of current American Sign
6 Language interpreters working in the State of Hawaii to obtain
7 information relevant to the study; and
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disability and
10 Communication Access Board and Hawaii Interpreting Services,
11 LLC, are requested to assist the Legislative Reference Bureau in
12 surveying ASL interpreters currently working in the State of
13 Hawaii; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study provide
16 recommendations as to statutory changes that might be enacted
17 and administrative or program changes, if any, that might be
18 implemented to increase the availability of ASL interpreters,
19 including but not limited to changes in areas such as:
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- 21 (1) The Disability and Communication Access Board;
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- 23 (2) Title 11, chapter 218, Hawaii Administrative Rules;
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- 25 (3) The HQAS test;
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- 27 (4) The Kapiolani Community College Interpreter Education
28 and Training Program; and
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- 30 (5) The Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the
31 Blind Division Interpreter Referral Contract; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
34 Bureau is requested to consult with the Disability and
35 Communication Access Board, the Vocational Rehabilitation and
36 Services for the Blind Division, Kapiolani Community College
37 Interpreter Education Program, Hawaii Interpreting Services,
38 LLC, Hawaii Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, LifeLinks VRI
39 (Video Remote Interpreters), and user groups of ASL interpreting
40 services in formulating recommendations, if any; and
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42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
43 Bureau submit its findings and recommendations to the



1 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
2 the 2011 Regular Session; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
5 Resolution be transmitted to the Executive Director of the
6 Disability and Communication Access Board, the Administrator of
7 the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind
8 Division, the Chancellor of the Kapiolani Community College, the
9 Hawaii Interpreting Services, LLC, the President of the Hawaii
10 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and the Director of the
11 Legislative Reference Bureau.

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