
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. American sign language is a vital part of the
2 linguistic heritage of the State that benefits and enriches
3 hearing-impaired and non-hearing-impaired individuals. American
4 sign language interpreters are routinely provided at private and
5 state functions and events. Introduction to American sign
6 language at an early age helps hearing-impaired individuals
7 become confident in their identity and sets the stage for their
8 personal success.

9 Although American sign language is the fourth most-popular
10 language at colleges and universities in the United States, it
11 is not currently recognized as a foreign language in Hawaii.
12 This lack of recognition makes it difficult for Hawaii public
13 schools to meet the needs of hearing-impaired students and to
14 help students who are interested in studying American sign
15 language in college to prepare for their studies. Forty-two
16 states currently recognize American sign language as a foreign
17 language and have incorporated it into public school curricula.



1 The department of education uses the term "world language" in
2 its course descriptions and graduation requirements.

3 The purpose of this Act is to recognize American sign
4 language as a world language and to allow students who pass
5 courses in American sign language to receive credit for those
6 courses toward satisfaction of graduation requirements for world
7 language.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
9 amended by adding a new section to part II to be appropriately
10 designated and to read as follows:

11 "§302A- American sign language. For purposes of this
12 chapter, American sign language shall be recognized as a world
13 language, and any public school may offer a course in American
14 sign language. A student who successfully completes a course in
15 American sign language shall be entitled to receive credit for
16 that course toward satisfaction of a world language requirement
17 of the public school at which the course is offered."

18 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

American Sign Language; Official World Language; Public Schools;
World Language Requirement

Description:

Recognizes American sign language as a world language, and
allows public school students who pass courses in American sign
language to receive credit toward world language graduation
requirements. (SB2981 HD1)

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