

Honolulu, Hawaii
February 18, 2016

RE: H.B. No. 2554
H.D. 1

Honorable Joseph M. Souki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2016
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred H.B. No. 2554 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish and designate American Sign Language (ASL) as an official foreign language of the State.

Disability and Communication Access Board, the Aloha State Association of the Deaf, Maui Deaf Friends, Hawaii Deaf Surfriders Association, and numerous individuals testified in support of this measure.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting the reference to ASL as an official language and instead clarifying ASL as an established and designated language distinct from English and Hawaiian, which are the official languages of the State; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee finds that ASL is one of the most popular foreign languages at institutions of higher education in the United States. Your Committee also finds there are many benefits



in recognizing ASL as an established and designated language including:

- (1) Allowing deaf children to become more self-confident in their identity, gain language fluency at an earlier age, and improve their critical-thinking skills; and
- (2) Enriching the language development of hearing children.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2554, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2554, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



