

SB2981

Measure Title: RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Report Title: American Sign Language; Official Foreign Language; Public Schools

Description: Recognizes American sign language as a foreign language, and allows public school students who pass courses in American sign language to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: EDU

Introducer(s): BAKER, KIDANI



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/02/2016
Time: 01:15 PM
Location: 229
Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2981 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Recognizes American sign language as a foreign language, and allows public school students who pass courses in American sign language to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

Department's Position:

The Department offers elective courses in American Sign Language (ASL). Classes are being conducted at three high schools, and any secondary school may offer a course in ASL.

The determination of whether elective classes in any world language are offered is made at the school level in response to the needs of the school community. It is based on the existence of adequate resources, student interest and enrollment, and the availability of a qualified teacher.

Board of Education Policy 104.1 (previously know as 4540) requires two credits in one of the specified programs of study: World Language, Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education. For World Language, a student must take two credits in a single World Language and credits must be taken in sequence with consecutive course numbers in the study of one language.

Further, a student who successfully completes an ASL course may also opt to receive credit for a course towards meeting the elective credit requirements to receive a high school graduation diploma.

As the Department already provides this credit earning opportunity, we respectfully suggest SB 2981 is not necessary.



Hi DOE Graduation Brochure.pdf

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: louis@hawaiidisabilityrights.org
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2981 on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM*
Date: Monday, February 29, 2016 4:51:31 PM

SB2981

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

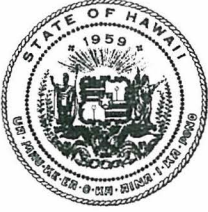
Testimony for EDU on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 101 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V/TDD) • Fax (808) 586-8129

March 2, 2016

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senate Bill 2981 – Relating to Education

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 2981 – Relating to Education. The purpose of this bill is to recognize American Sign Language (ASL) as a foreign language, and allow public school students who pass courses in American Sign Language (ASL) to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

This bill in recognizing ASL as a language that could be offered in high school to fulfill language requirements for graduation will improve opportunities for students in Hawaii by adding a language to school curricula. It will allow students to learn a new language and culture and possibly assist in adding to the ASL/English interpreter pool in Hawaii.

On page 2, lines 4-5 of the bill, recognizes ASL as a “foreign” language to allow students who pass courses to earn credits for high school graduation. In deference all languages in our diverse community in Hawaii, we request you consider deleting the word “foreign” and instead recognize ASL as a language that will satisfy foreign language graduation requirements from public schools where the course is available.

Offering students the opportunity to learn ASL in high school is commendable and will increase students’ knowledge about different cultures in our local community and may enhance the identities of Deaf and hard of hearing students who use ASL on a daily basis.

We request your consideration to amend the bill as suggested in our testimony.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

From: [Maui Deaf Friends](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SB 2982 support
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 12:14:17 PM

February 26, 2016

SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

We support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

ASL is recognized as “world” language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha’s Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Maui Deaf Friends, club
Parents , interpreters, teachers, deaf and hard of hearing citizens on Maui



TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT SB 2981

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear ChairKidani,

Our agency, **Isle Interpret, LLC** of Honolulu, HI, is a scheduling agency for sign language interpreters. Sign language interpreters provide an important communication bridge between deaf and hearing persons. Isle Interpret supports to SB 2981.

There is a nationwide shortage of qualified sign language interpreters. Interpreters most often begin their exposure and training in sign language in academic classrooms. Having sign language recognized as a distinct language would help increase the pool of candidates who could take classes and possibly follow a career path to becoming an interpreter. Allowing students who pass courses in American Sign Language to receive credit for courses toward foreign language requirements benefits the students and also our society in general.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, both Deaf, hard of hearing and hearing citizens.

Please support SB 2981.

With warm regard,
Isle Interpret, LLC
PO Box 1380
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Tamar Lani, President
Susan Kroe-Unabia, Vice President

From: [Aaron Silva Jr](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 5:47:37 PM

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is (Aaron Silva Jr.). I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

ASL is recognized as "world" language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

(Aaron Silva Jr.)
(Honolulu, Hi)

From: [Albert Marsh](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: Senate Bill 2981
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 8:44:03 AM

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Albert Marsh. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

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People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Albert Marsh
Makakilo, HI

From: [Alex Low](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SB 2981
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 8:33:20 AM

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Alexander Low. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

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People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Alexander Low

Mililani, HI

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani,

My name is Amber Lehano. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when-why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “ foreign” accent.

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People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote Yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Amber Lehano
Wahiawa, HI

From: [Austin](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 11:02:44 AM

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Austin Darner. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

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People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Austin Darner
Honolulu, HI

From: [Beth King](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SB 2981
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 12:06:04 PM

February 26, 2016

SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Beth King, teacher of the Deaf on Maui . I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

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People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Beth King
Kihei, Mauu, HI

--

Mrs. Beth King
Teacher of the Deaf
Maui High School

Cell 808 870 4818

February 27, 2016

**SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Christine Holmes. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within the Deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

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People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Christine Holmes
Christine Holmes

Honolulu, Hawaii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: ckcidade2@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2981 on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM
Date: Monday, February 29, 2016 10:29:18 PM
Attachments: [SB 2981.pdf](#)

SB2981

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for EDU on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
colleen cidade	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: I support HB 2981 because my FIRST language is ASL. thank you!

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: CANtheCANT@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2981 on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM*
Date: Monday, February 29, 2016 8:01:45 PM

SB2981

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for EDU on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Darlene Ewan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: [Edmund Silva](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 7:43:53 AM

SEND YOUR TESTIMONY LETTER! SEND YOUR TESTIMONY LETTER! SEND YOUR TESTIMONY LETTER!

E-mail to EDUtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov before March 1, 2016 by 1:30PM.

February 26, 2016

SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is (insert your name). I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

ASL is recognized as "world" language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Edmund Silva
Molokai, Hawaii

From: [Eileen Chiwa](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: Senate Bill 2981 Testimony
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 3:25:45 PM

February 27, 2016

**SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Eileen Chiwa. I support SB 2981. This bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as a foreign language, and allows public school students who pass courses in ASL to receive credit(s) for these courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within the deaf community; they can be independent of the surrounding spoken languages which are Hawaiian and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well-formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when-why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

ASL is recognized as a “world” language for credit in thirty-five (35) states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha’s Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in the United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign/world language. Please support and vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard-of-hearing, deafblind and hearing citizens.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Eileen Chiwa
Mililani, HI

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Gail Odagiri. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) be recognized as a "foreign" language, and allow public school students who pass courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses to satisfy foreign/world language requirements.

There are many benefits to learning ASL, from developing ones cognitive and communication skills to enriching the process of learning in a multi-dimensional language. Enhancing ones social skills is just "icing on the cake" due to the nature of Deaf culture. Historically, ASL had been suppressed for years since the infamous Milan Conference of 1880 when ASL was banned in education until it gained recognition as a bonafide language with its own grammar and syntax in the 1960's primarily due to the work of Dr. William Stokoe, Jr. It is time Hawaii joins the majority of the states in recognizing ASL as a foreign/world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language - all Deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind and hearing citizens.

May I suggest the following considerations if not in this bill then in future correspondences?

- 1) Where American sign language is referenced, that it be replaced with American Sign Language.
- 2) Where the term hearing impaired is referenced, that it be replaced with deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind individuals as appropriate. The term "hearing impaired" is a term hearing people use in government, medical and educational settings...however, many Deaf people (those immersed in Deaf culture) find the term offensive as it implies that they are defective.

Sincerely,

Gail Odagiri
Aiea, Hawaii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: heather.interpreter@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2981 on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM*
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 1:48:59 PM

SB2981

Submitted on: 3/1/2016

Testimony for EDU on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Heather Benjamin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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From: [Hercules GK](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Date: Sunday, February 28, 2016 9:03:38 AM

SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is HerCules, I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

ASL is recognized as "world" language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,
Hercules GK
Makakilo, HI

From: [Joy Enos](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: Senate Bill 2981 Testimony
Date: Sunday, February 28, 2016 10:51:25 AM

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI

Dear Chair Kidani:

Aloha! My name is Joy Enos. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

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People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Joy Enos
(Austin, Texas)

I was born and raised Kona, the Big Island. Going to Hawaii every summer to be with my parents and 'ohana. This is important to me to be part of the testimony. Mahalo nui loa!

From: [kariza jane esteban](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 10:10:42 PM

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is (Kariza Jane D. Esteban). I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

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People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,
Kariza Jane D. Esteban
(Wahiawa, Hawaii)

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: kaliasea@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2981 on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 5:08:57 PM

SB2981

Submitted on: 3/1/2016

Testimony for EDU on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Katharine E Avery	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Sign Language is a language and should be given credit as such! Mahalo

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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From: [KT](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: Support SB 2981
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 12:14:11 PM

February 27, 2016

SENATE BILL 3981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani,

My name is Kathy Thomas. I was born and raised in Oahu. I then moved to the mainland and returned home after 45 years. I could see everywhere that some local people still uses gestures here, like pau, come, eat, wait, drive, no, yes, and look.

We have some hearing children of Deaf parents in Hawaii, and I believe they'd be pleased to be able to share ASL with friends in middle and high schools. It'd be very good for their self-esteem and self-respect for sure.

Please support SB 2981 for our children of Hawaii, mahalo.

SB 2981 would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

ASL is recognized as "world" language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language.

Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Kathy Thomas
Kaneohe, HI

February 29, 2016

SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Kidani:

My name is Kurstin Chun. I have a MA in Sign Language Education, am nationally certified as an ASL instructor through the American Sign Language Teacher's Association (ASLTA), and I am an Educational Interpreter for the Department of Education here in Hawaii.

Before I share my testimony in what learning American Sign Language (ASL) has done for me personally, I would like to share a little bit of the history of how ASL came to be.

Different sign languages have been around since the beginning of time. George Veditz, a famous Deaf leader in the early 1900s stated, "As long as we have Deaf people on earth, we will have sign language." Sign languages in its purest form, especially in studies of Deaf indigenous populations, have shown that there are grammatical and syntactical structure to these languages separate of an auditory/oral language.

On April 15th, 1817, the American School for the Deaf (ASD) was founded in Hartford, Connecticut. This date is possibly one of the most important historical moments in ASL becoming what it is today. Because America was still a relatively new land, the sign languages used prior to this were not readily identified as languages. It wasn't until a man named Gallaudet recruited and brought back a French Deaf educator named Clerc to the states that ASL really began to bloom. Because of this, ASL has many linguistic similarities to that of French Sign Language (*langue des signes française* or LSF).

Since the founding of ASD, ASL users and the Deaf community have overcome years of oppression and ridicule. Although there have been many attempts to eradicate ASL, it has overcome the attempts and continues to grow today. It is a living language that evolves just like all other languages and it has a community that continues to use it daily.

According to the *Standards for Learning American Sign Language* published by ASLTA:

"The Modern Language Association's 2007 report discovered enrollment in ASL courses at the post-secondary level had increased by nearly 600% between 1998

and 2006. The 2010 MLA report revealed further growth in ASL with enrollments increasing an additional 16% between 2006 and 2009 making ASL the fourth-most enrolled language in higher education, behind Spanish, French, and German. At the secondary level, public school enrollments increased by 42.7% between 2004 and 2008. Today ASL is an increasingly viable and popular option for second language learners at all levels.”

However, even though ASL continues to grow in popularity, it is not protected. According to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization):

“It is estimated that, if nothing is done, half of 6000 plus languages spoken today will disappear by the end of this century. With the disappearance of unwritten and undocumented languages, humanity would lose not only a cultural wealth but also important ancestral knowledge embedded, in particular, in indigenous languages.”

Although it says “spoken”, I would prefer to replace it with the word “used” as we can see it happening today here in Hawaii with Hawaiian Sign Language (HSL). HSL is slowly dying out as stronger languages have taken its place throughout the years. By supporting this bill, we are in essence “documenting” ASL and allowing the language to be somewhat protected and preserved.

Currently more than half of our nation’s states recognize ASL as a foreign language. Not only does this allow ASL to be somewhat protected and preserved, but it allows for Deaf communities to thrive even more, especially as families with Deaf members begin to take classes and understand that ASL is a real language. Other benefits include higher enrollment in our secondary and post-secondary schools, earlier development of future Deaf community members and leaders, more social opportunities for Deaf students at the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind, and more opportunities for special needs individuals to communicate in a different modality.

My personal testimony of ASL as a foreign language is that without it I would be an emotional disaster. I grew up most of my life on the mainland and was an Asian minority who experienced discrimination. Culturally, I learned that emotions were not to be seen or talked about. My family expected me to deal with things in my own way. I did not realize it when I was young, but I often would participate in sports as my emotional outlet.

After my college volleyball days were over, I was lucky enough to take an ASL class. I had already fulfilled my language requirement, but I think I was looking for a way to express myself since I didn’t know how to with regular spoken English. I literally dove into the Deaf community as soon as I was able to sign a basic ASL conversation. I, an introvert, first became involved in the on campus sign language club. I became the treasurer and eventually the president of the club. I also sought out and joined a Deaf church during those years. After I took all the classes I could at California State University - Hayward, even though I was still finishing

up my major requirements, I decided to continue developing my ASL skills by taking classes simultaneously at Vista Community College. This branched out my involvement with the Deaf community to the Berkeley area where there was a Deaf club. Eventually, I took all the classes that I could and graduated. My very first job was with a Deaf organization named DCARA (Deaf Counseling, Advocacy & Referral Agency).

I cannot think of my life without ASL and the Deaf community. This is one of the reasons why I decided to get my MA degree in Sign Language Education. If there are more people like me who need ASL to express what they cannot in verbal English, I want them to have the same opportunity as I have had.

ASL has changed my life and I believe that it can impact the lives of many others. We already have a school for the Deaf and a community of individuals who use ASL daily. Please support SB 2981 and allow ASL to be recognized as a foreign language.

Sincerely,

Kurstin Chun
Aiea, Hawaii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: poulosmom@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2981 on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM*
Date: Friday, February 26, 2016 5:07:37 PM

SB2981

Submitted on: 2/26/2016

Testimony for EDU on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Poulos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: lisa2tom@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2981 on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM
Date: Monday, February 29, 2016 9:03:52 PM

SB2981

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for EDU on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Tom	Individual	Support	No

Comments: My name is LisaAnn Tom and I reside in Honolulu, Hawaii. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements. ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent. ASL is recognized as "world" language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish. People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens. Thank you for your time in reading my testimony.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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From:
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SB2981
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 12:16:23 PM

February 26, 2016

SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Lucas King . I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

ASL is recognized as “world” language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha’s Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Lucas King
Kihei, Maui

From: [Lucy Miller](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: Support SB 2981
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 6:47:49 PM

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Lucille Miller, and I urge you to support SB 2981. This bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

Deaf children must use ASL to receive educational opportunities. Through ASL they have a better chance to learn English and become more fully functioning citizens. In recognizing ASL as a foreign language more hearing students will study ASL which can enable them to choose to become professional interpreters for the deaf.

Mahalo,

Lucy

Dr. Lucy Miller

drlucy@hawaii.rr.com

Lihue, Hawaii

From: [Mala Arkin](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SB 2981 Testimony
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 12:12:17 PM

SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Mala Arkin. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

ASL is recognized as “world” language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha’s Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

I speak from my own experience as an ASL-English interpreter when I say that the people of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Mala Arkin
Honolulu, HI

Clear Access Interpreting Services LLC
Mala Arkin HQAS IV, NIC
Certified Sign Language Interpreter

Po Box 11988
Honolulu, HI 96828

808-387-1902 (voice/text)

From: mikebaby_oallesma
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 10:08:47 PM

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is (Mirasol Tabian Oallesma). I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

ASL is recognized as "world" language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,
Mirasol Tabian Oallesma
(Wahiawa, Hawaii)

From: mdsacco@rochester.rr.com
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Date: Monday, February 29, 2016 6:41:47 PM

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Matthew Sacco. I am a Special Education Teacher - Hearing Impaired at Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements. American Sign Language does have its own grammar and sentence structures. Since the ear doesn't work well, deaf people heavily depend on eyes for sight of the language to be understood. For example, hearing people tend to use tone on the voice. Deaf people tend to use facial expressions for showing their true colors and feeling.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

ASL is recognized as "world" language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Matthew Sacco
Honolulu, HI

From: [Mike L](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Date: Sunday, February 28, 2016 7:00:35 AM

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Michael Low, and I am writing in support of SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaiian and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well-formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules incorrectly, or inconsistently, it would be equivalent to that of having a “foreign” accent.

ASL is recognized as “world” language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha’s Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is the third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit greatly in their career, educational and social benefits through learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,
Michael Low
Mililani, HI

From: [Ana, Philip](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: Senate bill 2981
Date: Monday, February 29, 2016 10:11:32 AM

SEND YOUR TESTIMONY LETTER! SEND YOUR TESTIMONY LETTER! SEND YOUR TESTIMONY LETTER! SEND YOUR TESTIMONY LETTER!

E-mail to EDUtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov before March 1, 2016 by 1:30PM.

February 26, 2016

SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Philip Ana (insert your name). I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

ASL is recognized as "world" language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

(Your Name) Philip Ana
(Honolulu City, Hawaii State)

Sincerely,
Philip Ana
Long Term Care Disability Specialist
Executive Office on Aging
250 S. Hotel St #406
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-586-7289

From: [Precious Bautista](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 10:47:47 PM

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Precious Bautista . I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

ASL is recognized as “world” language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha’s Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Precious Bautista
Waianae, HI

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: ruru54ia@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2981 on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM
Date: Monday, February 29, 2016 11:00:10 PM

SB2981

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for EDU on Mar 2, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
ruth jones	ASAD	Comments Only	No

Comments: Please pass this bill. It's important to all of us deaf on the island to have our language recognized.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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From: hisabina808@gmail.com on behalf of [Sabina Wilford](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SB2981
Date: Monday, February 29, 2016 8:23:33 PM

Aloha Senator Kidani,

I fully support the passing of this bill. I learned American Sign Language (ASL) over 30 years ago, and I continue to learn. In high school I took both Spanish and French, but never became comfortable or fluent. ASL resonated with me and matched my learning style. Because of being able to acquire this language right out of high school, I was able to become fluent and it lead to a career as a sign language interpreter.

Research as shown a strong correlation between the age of someone learns a language and the success of fluency. Teaching students in high school or younger is a great step in the right direction for success.

Thank you chair for entertaining this important bill.

Sabina Wilford

--
Sabina Wilford
Hawaii Interpreting Services, LLC
808-394-7706
sabina@interpretinghawaii.com

February 29, 2016

SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Sarah Comerford. I am writing today in support of SB 2981. This bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who pass courses in ASL to receive credit toward their foreign language requirements.

ASL is a full- formed, linguistically distinguished language, entirely separate grammatically and syntactically from any spoken language. I began learning American Sign Language as a high school student in California, to satisfy my foreign language requirement. Once I graduated, I moved to Hawai'i to attend college and I took three more years worth of ASL classes at Kapiolani Community College. This language allowed me to enter the Deaf world, to have an untold number of meaningful the interactions with Deaf individuals that inspired my life in a multitude of ways. Learning ASL helped me become the person that I am today: an educator, an interpreter, and an advocate.

ASL is recognized as “world” language for credit in 35 U.S. states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish. The people of Hawaii would benefit from the career, educational, and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign language, just as I have. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens, and to bring added richness to the education of our students.

Sincerely,

Sarah Comerford

HQAS IV, EIPA 3.4, NIC Candidate

Owner, Operator: Comerford Interpreting & Tutoring Services, LLC

Secretary: Hawaii Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (HRID)

From: [Stephanie Steinlein-Balding](#)
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 5:35:54 PM

February 26, 2016
SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Stephanie Steinlein-Balding. I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a "foreign" accent.

ASL is recognized as "world" language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Steinlein-Balding
Honolulu Hawaii

Stephanie

From:
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Subject: SB2981
Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016 12:08:09 PM

February 26, 2016
SENATE BILL 2981 TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Michelle Kidani
Chair of Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kidani:

My name is Theo King . I support SB 2981. The bill would provide that American Sign Language (ASL) can be recognized as foreign language, and allows public school students who passes courses in ASL to receive credit for the courses toward foreign language requirements.

ASL develops within deaf community, they can be independent of the surrounding spoken language which is Hawaii and English. ASL does not follow spoken English word order. We have our own grammar. They are well formed sentences in ASL. For example, eyebrows should be down for a who-what-where-when- why question, and up for a yes/no question. If you use the rules wrong, or inconsistently, you will have a “foreign” accent.

ASL is recognized as “world” language for credit in 35 states. A form of ASL has been used in the United States for over two hundred years. The ASL we know today is most likely drawn from both the local sign language (namely Martha’s Vineyard, an island off of Massachusetts) and French Sign Language of the past. It is third most widely used language in United States after English and Spanish.

People of Hawaii would benefit from career, educational and social benefits of learning ASL as a foreign / world language. Please vote yes to honor the community that uses this language, all Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind and hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Ted King
Kihei, Maui HI
Sent from my iPhone