

MAR 03 2023

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS
TO ESTABLISH AN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER
WORKFORCE WORKING GROUP TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN
SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, American Sign Language (ASL) is a distinct
2 language with its own cultural heritage and language rules and
3 structure; and
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5 WHEREAS, ASL interpreters provide a critical service to
6 deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and hearing individuals and
7 public agencies in the State who wish to effectively communicate
8 with each other in a variety of settings and circumstances; and
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10 WHEREAS, the Disability and Communication Access Board
11 notes there is an increased need statewide for communication
12 access provided by ASL interpreters, as reflected in the number
13 of requests made to local interpreter referral agencies; and
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15 WHEREAS, despite the increase in requests for ASL
16 interpreting services, there is increased difficulty in the
17 recruitment of individuals who are qualified to serve as ASL
18 interpreters; and
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20 WHEREAS, to provide greater accessibility for individuals
21 to receive ASL interpretation services in the State during
22 emergencies and daily life activities, there is a critical need
23 to develop an ASL interpreter workforce; now, therefore,
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25 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
26 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2023;
27 that the Department of Health's Office of Language Access is
28 requested to convene an American Sign Language Interpreter
29 Workforce Working Group for the purpose of promoting the
30 increase of American Sign Language interpreters in the State;
31 and
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S.R. NO. 26

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
2 to recommend training and incentives to increase the number of
3 ASL interpreters in the State; and

4
5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group's membership
6 include the following members:

- 7
8 (1) A representative from the Department of Health Office
9 of Language Access who shall serve as chairperson of
10 the working group;
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12 (2) A representative from the Department of Education;
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14 (3) A representative from the Department of Human Services
15 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
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17 (4) A member of the Deaf and Blind Task Force;
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19 (5) A professor from the University of Hawaii who teaches
20 ASL;
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22 (6) A senator selected by the President of the Senate;
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24 (7) A representative selected by the Speaker of the House
25 of Representatives;
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27 (8) An individual who currently serves as an ASL
28 interpreter; and
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30 (9) Additional representatives invited by the chairperson
31 of the working group; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group, with the
34 administrative assistance of the Department of Health, is
35 requested to submit an interim report of its findings and
36 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
37 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
38 the Regular Session of 2024 and a final report no later than
39 twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of
40 2026; and
41



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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
2 to be dissolved on June 30, 2026; 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 Office of Language Access, Superintendent of Education,
7 Administrator of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation,
8 President of the University of Hawaii System, President of the
9 Senate, Speaker of the House of Representative, and Chair of the
10 Deaf and Blind Task Force.

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OFFERED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. A. A.", written over a horizontal line.