S.R. NO. 26

MAR 0 3 2023

SENATE RESOLUTION

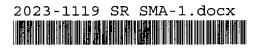
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS TO ESTABLISH AN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER WORKFORCE WORKING GROUP TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, American Sign Language (ASL) is a distinct language with its own cultural heritage and language rules and 2 3 structure; and 4 WHEREAS, ASL interpreters provide a critical service to 5 deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and hearing individuals and 6 7 public agencies in the State who wish to effectively communicate 8 with each other in a variety of settings and circumstances; and 9 WHEREAS, the Disability and Communication Access Board 10 notes there is an increased need statewide for communication 11 12 access provided by ASL interpreters, as reflected in the number of requests made to local interpreter referral agencies; and 13 14 15 WHEREAS, despite the increase in requests for ASL interpreting services, there is increased difficulty in the 16 recruitment of individuals who are qualified to serve as ASL 17 18 interpreters; and 19 20 WHEREAS, to provide greater accessibility for individuals to receive ASL interpretation services in the State during 21 emergencies and daily life activities, there is a critical need 22 23 to develop an ASL interpreter workforce; now, therefore, 24 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 requested to convene an American Sign Language Interpreter 28 29 Workforce Working Group for the purpose of promoting the increase of American Sign Language interpreters in the State; 30 31 and 32



1 2 3 4	to recomme	T FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested end training and incentives to increase the number of preters in the State; and
5 6 7		T FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group's membership he following members:
8 9 10	(1)	A representative from the Department of Health Office of Language Access who shall serve as chairperson of the working group;
11 12 13	(2)	A representative from the Department of Education;
14 15	(3)	A representative from the Department of Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
16 17 18	(4)	A member of the Deaf and Blind Task Force;
19 20	(5)	A professor from the University of Hawaii who teaches ASL;
21 22 23	(6)	A senator selected by the President of the Senate;
24 25 26	(7)	A representative selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
26 27 28 29	(8)	An individual who currently serves as an ASL interpreter; and
30 31	(9)	Additional representatives invited by the chairperson of the working group; and
32 33 34 35 36 37 38 20	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group, with the administrative assistance of the Department of Health, is requested to submit an interim report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2024 and a final report no later than	
39 40	twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026; and	

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
to be dissolved on June 30, 2026; and

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.

OFFERED BY:

