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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that olelo Hawaii, the  
2 Hawaiian language, is the native language of the Native Hawaiian  
3 people. While once spoken throughout Hawaii by Native Hawaiians  
4 and foreigners alike, olelo Hawaii was considered to be nearly  
5 extinct by the 1980s, when fewer than fifty fluent speakers  
6 under the age of eighteen were left. A major reason for the  
7 deterioration of the Hawaiian language was an 1896 law that  
8 required English instruction in Hawaii schools. In practice,  
9 this law functioned to "ban" students from speaking olelo Hawaii  
10 at their schools.

11           To save the Hawaiian language, a number of historic  
12 initiatives were launched, including Aha Punana Leo's Hawaiian  
13 language immersion preschools, the department of education's  
14 Hawaiian language immersion program, and the Hawaiian language  
15 programs of the university of Hawaii system.



1           In addition, in 1978, the Hawaii constitution was amended  
2 to recognize the Hawaiian language as one of the two official  
3 languages of the State.

4           Furthermore, several important gubernatorial proclamations  
5 on olelo Hawaii were issued in the 1990s. In 1994 and 1995,  
6 gubernatorial proclamations, written in both Hawaiian and  
7 English, were issued recognizing February 1994 and February 1995  
8 as "Hawaiian Language Month in Hawaii." The proclamations urged  
9 people to participate in the Hawaiian language activities held  
10 in February.

11           While the Hawaiian language revitalization movement has  
12 made major strides in the last thirty years, for olelo Hawaii to  
13 not just survive, but to also thrive, more people need to speak  
14 Hawaiian.

15           Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require students  
16 of Hawaii's public schools to learn Hawaiian.

17           SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
18 amended by adding a new section to part I, subpart B, to read as  
19 follows:

20           "§302A-           Hawaiian language instruction required.

21           Beginning with high school diplomas awarded at the conclusion of



1 the 2027-2028 school year, each student shall complete course  
2 work for two credits of Hawaiian language instruction as a  
3 requirement for a high school diploma."

4 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'O. K.', written over a horizontal line.

JAN 18 2024



# H.B. NO. 1794

**Report Title:**

Hawaiian Language; DOE; Graduation Requirements

**Description:**

Requires that each Department of Education public school student earn 2 credits in Hawaiian language as a graduation requirement.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

