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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that American Sign  
2 Language (ASL) interpreters provide a critical service to deaf,  
3 hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and hearing individuals, and to  
4 public agencies in the State, that wish to effectively  
5 communicate with each other in a variety of settings and  
6 circumstances. Despite the increase in requests for ASL  
7 interpreting services, there has been increased difficulty in  
8 the recruitment of individuals who are qualified to serve as ASL  
9 interpreters.

10           The legislature further finds that there remains a critical  
11 need to develop an ASL interpreter workforce and that acquiring  
12 additional information on the current condition of ASL in Hawaii  
13 would help provide a firm foundation to ensure greater access  
14 for individuals to receive ASL interpretation services in the  
15 State during emergencies and daily life activities and address  
16 other current and future issues relating to this critical  
17 service.



1           Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the  
2 disability and communication access board to convene a working  
3 group to study the state of American Sign Language in Hawaii.

4           SECTION 2. (a) The disability and communication access  
5 board shall convene a working group to:

6           (1) Study the state of American Sign Language in Hawaii;  
7                 and

8           (2) Investigate and study any means, methods, processes,  
9                 or systems that might improve the provision of  
10                American Sign Language services in the State.

11          (b) The working group shall consist of the following  
12 members:

13          (1) A representative from the disability and communication  
14               access board, who shall serve as chairperson of the  
15               working group;

16          (2) A representative from the department of human services  
17               division of vocational rehabilitation;

18          (3) A representative from the department of education;

19          (4) A professor from the university of Hawaii who teaches  
20               American Sign Language;

21          (5) A member of the deaf and blind taskforce;



1           (6) An individual who currently serves as an American Sign  
2           Language interpreter, who shall be invited by the  
3           chairperson of the working group; and

4           (7) Additional representatives invited by the chairperson  
5           of the working group.

6           (c) The working group, with the assistance of the  
7           department of health, shall submit a report of its findings and  
8           recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the  
9           legislature no later than December 31, 2024.

10          (d) The working group shall be dissolved on June 30, 2025.

11          (e) The invited members of the working group shall serve  
12          without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for reasonable  
13          expenses incurred, including travel expenses.

14          (f) No member of the working group shall be made subject  
15          to chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, solely because of that  
16          member's participation as a member of the working group.

17          SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

DCAB; DOH; ASL; Working Group; Interpreters; Report

**Description:**

Requires the Disability and Communication Access Board to convene a working group to study the state of American Sign Language in Hawaii. Requires the working group, with the assistance of the Department of Health, to submit a report to the Legislature. (SD2)

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

