

JAN 18 2024

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COURT INTERPRETERS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that court interpreters
2 are independent contractors of the judiciary who play an
3 integral role in the administration of justice in the State.
4 Hawaii has one of the largest populations of non-English
5 speakers in the nation. The legislature further finds that
6 court interpreters are often required to drive, sometimes for
7 hours, to distant courthouses to provide interpretation services
8 that are critical for a defendant with limited English
9 proficiency to exercise the defendant's constitutional and
10 statutory right to represent themselves in court or assist
11 counsel.

12 The legislature finds however, that despite the substantial
13 increase in the cost of living in Hawaii over the years,
14 including considerable increases in the prices of automobiles
15 and gasoline, the compensation for court interpreters has
16 remained largely unchanged since it was established in 2007.



1 The legislature therefore finds that an increase in the fees and
2 rates for court interpreters is overdue.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
4 judiciary to increase the hourly fees, mileage reimbursement
5 rate, and commuter-time compensation rate for court interpreters
6 to reflect the significant increase in the cost of living in
7 Hawaii.

8 SECTION 2. The judiciary shall amend its rules and
9 policies governing compensation for court interpreters by:

10 (1) Increasing the hourly fees for court interpreters as
11 follows:

- 12 (A) Tier 1 court interpreters from \$25 to \$40;
- 13 (B) Tier 2 court interpreters from \$35 to \$50;
- 14 (C) Tier 3 court interpreters from \$40 to \$60;
- 15 (D) Tier 4 court interpreters from \$45 to \$70;
- 16 (E) Tier 5 court interpreters from \$50 to \$80; and
- 17 (F) Tier 6 court interpreters from \$55 to \$90;

18 provided that the hourly fees set forth in this
19 paragraph shall be amended on July 1 of each year to
20 reflect the increase in the State's consumer price



1 index, as measured by the Honolulu consumer price
2 index for the preceding year;

3 (2) Amending its mileage reimbursement rate to incorporate
4 the annual standard mileage rate issued by the
5 Internal Revenue Service each year; and

6 (3) Amending its commuter-time compensation rate for court
7 interpreters who travel one hundred fifty miles or
8 more for one assignment to receive three-hours of
9 their hourly fees as commuter-time compensation for
10 the assignment.

11 SECTION 3. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of
12 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,
13 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the
14 appropriations contained in H.B. No. 300, H.D. 1, S.D. 1,
15 C.D. 1, and this Act will cause the state general fund
16 expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2023-2024 to be exceeded by
17 \$ or per cent. This current declaration
18 takes into account general fund appropriations authorized for
19 fiscal year 2023-2024 in H.B. No. 300, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, C.D. 1,
20 and this Act only. The reasons for exceeding the general fund
21 expenditure ceiling are that:



1 (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to
2 serve the public interest; and

3 (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs
4 addressed by this Act.

5 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
7 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 to
8 fund the increase in the hourly rates, mileage reimbursement
9 rate, and commuter-time compensation rate for court interpreters
10 pursuant to this Act.

11 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary for
12 the purposes of this Act.

13 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

14

INTRODUCED BY: 



S.B. NO. 2181

Report Title:

Court Interpreters; Hourly fees; Mileage Reimbursement Rate; Commuter compensation Rate; Judiciary; Expenditure Ceiling; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Judiciary to increase the hourly fees, mileage reimbursement rate, and commuter-time compensation rate for court interpreters. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. Makes an appropriation.

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