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## HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS TO CONDUCT A  
FEASIBILITY STUDY ON ESTABLISHING A STATEWIDE CENTRALIZED  
LANGUAGE ACCESS RESOURCE CENTER.

1           WHEREAS, for many people in Hawai'i, English is not  
2 their primary language, and they have only a limited ability to  
3 read, write, speak, or understand English; and  
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5           WHEREAS, according to the 2000 census, nearly two hundred  
6 ninety thousand people, or twenty-four per cent of Hawaii's  
7 population, speak a language other than English at home,  
8 including more than two hundred fifty thousand people who speak  
9 an Asian or Pacific Island language; and  
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11           WHEREAS, for persons who are limited English proficient,  
12 language barriers prohibit them from fully participating in the  
13 community and can undermine their ability to be self-sufficient  
14 and productive; and  
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16           WHEREAS, the legislature enacted Act 290, Session Laws of  
17 Hawaii 2006, codified as part of chapter 371, Hawaii Revised  
18 Statutes, to address the language access needs of limited  
19 English proficient persons by, among other things, requiring  
20 each state agency to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful  
21 access by limited English proficient persons to services,  
22 programs, and activities funded and provided by the State; and  
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24           WHEREAS, as the lead agency for the State in this regard,  
25 the department of labor and industrial relations plays a  
26 critical role; and  
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28           WHEREAS, all state agencies and other covered entities are  
29 required to establish a plan for language access to provide  
30 equal, meaningful access to essential government services, such  
31 as social services, job training, employment assistance, fair  
32 and impartial hearings, and emergency assistance, to all of

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1 Hawaii's diverse population regardless of their primary  
2 language; and

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4 WHEREAS, as of December 2007, plans for twenty-three out of  
5 twenty-five state agencies and forty covered entities were  
6 completed; and

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8 WHEREAS, as the implementation of the plans approaches, two  
9 major stumbling blocks hinder meaningful access to essential  
10 government services for persons who are limited English  
11 proficient. First, there is no comprehensive system in Hawaii  
12 to identify language interpreters and translators and to refer  
13 interpreters or translators to the state agencies and other  
14 covered entities seeking assistance. Second, there is a lack of  
15 trained and certified language interpreters and translators who  
16 can meet the demand to assist limited English proficient persons  
17 in a timely, meaningful manner; now, therefore,

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19 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
20 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
21 Session of 2008, that the Office of Language Access under the  
22 department of labor and industrial relations, State of Hawaii,  
23 is requested to conduct a feasibility study on establishing a  
24 statewide centralized language access resource center. The  
25 study will include a survey of existing language resources as  
26 well as the language service needs and costs of state agencies  
27 and covered entities. In addition, it will include an analysis  
28 of the functions of a language resource center, including, but  
29 not limited to, the following:

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31 (1) Compiling and maintaining a roster of available  
32 language interpreters and translators;

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34 (2) Coordinating training programs to increase the  
35 availability of qualified language interpreters and translators;

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37 (3) Matching and referring qualified language interpreters  
38 and translators to the needs of state agencies and other covered  
39 entities seeking assistance;

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