



LATE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/18/2015
Time: 01:30 PM
Location: 229
Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: SCR 041 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO OFFER COURSES IN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.

Purpose of Resolution:

Department's Position:

The Department offers elective courses in ASL. Classes are being conducted at three high schools and one intermediate school in different areas across the state, and any secondary school may offer a course in ASL.

The determination of whether elective classes in any world language are offered is made at the school level in response to the needs of the school community. It is based on the existence of adequate resources, student interest and enrollment and the availability of a qualified teacher. Expansion of ASL classes to complex areas that currently do not offer them would be dependent on these factors.

Given the Department's current initiatives and budget, additional general funds or another dedicated funding source would be required to recruit and hire qualified instructors, support training costs, and purchase instructional materials statewide.

As the Department is providing this learning opportunity in schools, we respectfully suggest SCR 41 is not necessary.

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

In support of SR 16 regarding Department of Education to offer American Sign Language courses within the high schools across the state of Hawaii.

My name is Beth Blatt. I am a 30 year resident of Hawaii and was born in Kona on the Big Island. I graduated from Konawaena High School in 1993. As a hearing person I am a current American Sign Language and Deaf Studies student at Kapiolani Community College.

Back in high school the languages offered at that time was French, Spanish, maybe Japanese, and maybe Hawaiian. I chose to take up French Language. It sounded unusual and the culture was interesting like any other culture. I had an appreciation for the exposure but knew I would have no use for it again. In high school there is so much focus on college readiness and preparedness. Students are encouraged and prompted to pick a major or a career and begin to work in that direction. Courses in high school such as Home Economics teach students life skills of today. Other courses like Music, Math, English, Art, and various elective courses expose students to the different experiences that they are likely to return to at some point throughout their lives. My French language has since never been needed or used after completing the course. The French speaking community in Hawaii is very small if it exists at all.

I truly support SR16 and there are several reasons why. First, it is a visual language and most people are visual learners by nature. As visual learners it makes it easier to retain most of the signs as well as the entire alphabet. Second, there is a greater chance that American Sign Language would be used again, after the course is complete, either purposefully or inadvertently. And last but certainly not least, the Deaf culture and the Deaf community is larger than most people might think. Deaf culture in America is just another part of American culture and needs to be recognized and studied by hearing students across the board. Exposure to American Sign Language can lead to many opportunities for high school students upon graduation and it can add to their life skills of today.

Thank you for allowing me to demonstrate my testimony.

Aloha,

Beth Blatt

Honolulu, HI

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc:
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR41 on Mar 20, 2015 13:30PM
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2015 9:13:43 AM

SCR41

Submitted on: 3/19/2015

Testimony for EDU on Mar 20, 2015 13:30PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: GREAT IDEA ... BUT WHO PAYS FOR IT? We already can not get enough teachers at the current rate that you all pay . Perhaps take the money for this great idea from one of the extra bureaucrats at the DOE who does not affect student learning?

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Jadie Karratti-Abordo
Hawaii Kai, HI
March 17, 2015

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education in support of SCR 41/SR 16 request for the Department of Education to offer courses in American Sign Language (ASL)

Aloha my name is Jadie Karratti-Abordo and I am a hearing individual who strongly believes in the benefits of this bill. I have been taking ASL classes at Kapiolani Community College for the past 2 years and am currently enrolled in taking Deaf Culture and Deaf Education courses. I continue to take ASL for my own personal interests. After, taking one course in ASL I fell in love with the culture and the language. My classes have profoundly affected my life for the better. It has taught me of the struggles that the Deaf community faces, such as access to interpreters for all means of communication. Furthermore, my classes have provided me with basic ASL skills, which I would consider beneficial to my life's purpose. I originally enrolled in this class as a second language requirement for school. However, my ASL classes involved me in the Deaf Community and now I continue my deaf studies education because I value the ASL skills I have obtained thus far. For example, I work part time in a restaurant and with the ASL skills I have I am able to communicate with deaf individuals if they need assistance. I also work in a park and I feel the use of ASL could be very beneficial for our parks by offering an interpretive guide so that Deaf visitors can experience the cultural and geological history of the park. However, though I obtain basic skills in ASL I was only allowed access to ASL as a second language in college and missed the opportunity to learn this while in high school. Furthermore, only KCC offers ASL as a language in the college system, which means as a student at UH I had to commute to KCC to take ASL courses. If I was offered ASL during high school, I would have been fluent in ASL by now, however, I missed the opportunity to explore my passion as an adolescent. I understand that we offer other languages such as Japanese, Chinese, French and Spanish, however, in Hawaii there is little opportunity to develop language skills in the European languages. Furthermore, to become literate in Japanese and Chinese is an extremely difficult task. Therefore, why not have languages that we can actually use in our daily lives, such as ASL. The Deaf community in Hawaii is relatively large and the opportunity to participate in the Deaf community is available. Therefore, for the sake of advancing our education system and offering more opportunity to our youth and better access for deaf individuals it is pertinent to teach ASL in the DOE system. If ASL is implemented in the DOE system, students could easily become fluent in this language and continue their education into the university system. Furthermore, similar to Hawaiian language, which faced near extinction due to the use of English, ASL has faced many struggles competing with oralism. However, by passing this bill the DOE will help preserve ASL and avoid the same oppression Hawaiian language is currently still recovering from. Furthermore, access to ASL will open more opportunities for individuals, who like me wish to incorporate these skills into their future. For myself, I hope to one day become a doctor and work with deaf individuals directly illuminating the need for an interpreter when working with my patients. If I was offered ASL in high school I currently would be fluent in ASL, which would have placed me ahead of the curve. However, because of lack there

of, I still have a significant amount of skill to build in order to fluently communicate using ASL. Please pass this bill to not only preserve a means of communication but to offer greater opportunity and better access for our future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jadie Karratti-Abordo
Hawaii Kai, HI

LATE

Testimony for public hearing
Hawaii State Legislature
March 18, 2015

Logan Morikawa
2810 Kalawao S.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Hi, my name is Logan Morikawa. I would like to support the SR16 bill. I am 22 years old and want to get my driver's license. I am currently a student at KCC. I think it would be best for me to have direct communication using ASL so I can understand the instructor better. With that opportunity, they might learn ASL during High School and achieve the accessibility at DMV in the future.

I believe that this will give equal opportunities for the deaf and hard of hearing people. This bill will really help a lot of people and it will make everyone's lives much easier because of having this access. All high schools whether public or private should have ASL as a language so that people are aware of the Deaf culture.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify.

Aloha,
Logan Morikawa
Kahala, Hawaii

LATE

Wednesday March 18, 2015

Micah K. Steigerwald
Support for SR 16 Relating to ASL in High Schools

My name is Micah Steigerwald. I am in support of SR 16 requiring American Sign Language (ASL) to be taught as a second language in Hawai'i's public schools.

I can hear and I learned American Sign Language (ASL) in college. During my educational journey, I worked as an English tutor at Kapi'o'lani Community College. I had two hard-of-hearing students who I met after learning ASL, and I was successful in assisting them with their written English essays. If I did not know any ASL direct communication would have been impossible. My co-workers had expressed to me that if I was not working, they would not have been able to help those students. In addition, I had an English professor express that she would not have been able to help those students. This would have also been true of the math tutors. Having ASL available as a second language in high school would give hearing people more opportunities to communicate directly with deaf people. Deaf high school students who are in mainstream public schools and hard-of-hearing students whose second language is ASL would also benefit from ASL courses. Having ASL courses available in public high schools would benefit both deaf and hearing people by teaching ASL, assisting with learning English and Mathematics, and the social mixing of two different cultures.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

Micah K. Steigerwald
McCully, Honolulu, HI

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Rita Keakealani Reeves
March 17, 2015

Support for SR16 Requesting the Department of Education to offer courses in American Sign Language.

My name is Rita Keakealani Reeves; I am in support of having Department of Education to offer courses in American Sign Language.

In support of having American Sign Language in our public schools on all of the Hawaii islands. This will build a strong foundation for our deaf and hard of hearing and hearing children to be able to communicate with family members help build their self-identity and in the future this will give us an opportunity to be able to communicate out in society without an interpreter.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,
Kona,Hawaii

LATE

Wednesday March 18, 2015

Vanny R. Sivongxay

Support for SR 16 Relating to ASL in High Schools.

My name is Vanny Sivongxay. I am in support of SR 16 requiring American Sign Language (ASL) to be taught as a second language in Hawaii's public schools.

I am a hearing person who learned ASL at Kapiolani Community College. I am not fluent, but still practice as much as I can. Growing up with a Deaf sister communication was not very easy. I never learned ASL until my college years. Now that I have learned ASL and about their culture, I am sadden of how much I have missed out on my sister's life and communicating with her throughout the years.

I am in support for having ASL to be taught in High schools because I believe this will help with people like myself, growing up, who have no knowledge and access to ASL to better their communication and understanding with ASL with friends and family. I also, believe this would be great for the community for both hearing and Deaf individuals who someday will cross path with each other, this will help with communication. Not only it will help with communication, this will also give the hearing world a better understanding that ASL (Deaf people) does exist and to help with the Deaf awareness, and ASL is another language. I strongly feel this will benefit the hearing communities and the Deaf communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

Vanny R. Sivongxay

Kapolei, HI