
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE STATE TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN
SERVICES, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY STATE
GOVERNMENT FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.

1 WHEREAS, the State comprises people who speak many
2 languages; and

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4 WHEREAS, Hawaii is home to a large number of persons with
5 limited English proficiency who do not speak English as their
6 primary language and self-identify as having a limited ability
7 to read, write, speak, or understand English; and

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9 WHEREAS, for persons with limited English proficiency,
10 language can be a barrier to accessing important benefits or
11 services, understanding and exercising important rights,
12 complying with applicable responsibilities, or understanding
13 information; and

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15 WHEREAS, a significant number of elderly residents and
16 newcomers are less proficient in English and are challenged in
17 their daily tasks such as visiting the pharmacy, communicating
18 with a physician, and managing access to essential services,
19 including access to municipal water and electricity services;
20 and

21
22 WHEREAS, the State's workforce includes persons with
23 limited English proficiency who also face challenges because of
24 their inability to fully understand instructions for safe
25 workplace practices or requirements and information related to
26 the safe handling of toxic materials and legal disposal of
27 harmful waste, which puts them at significant physical risk; and



1 WHEREAS, children with limited English proficiency face
2 significant challenges in gaining meaningful access to and
3 participating in social, educational, and recreational
4 opportunities when they are restricted by the lack of available
5 bilingual caregivers, school counselors, teachers, coaches, and
6 other adults who contribute to the development of their health
7 and educational success; and

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9 WHEREAS, a significant percentage of visitors to the State
10 lack proficiency in English and, therefore, are at risk in
11 situations where they are unable to understand written or verbal
12 warnings about dangerous surf conditions, impending severe
13 weather, appropriate responses to emergency sirens or warnings,
14 and restrictions on interacting with wildlife, including
15 protected species; and

16
17 WHEREAS, one of the underpinnings of our State is the Aloha
18 Spirit, which is codified in law, and it is with the Aloha
19 Spirit and good feelings that the people of Hawaii have toward
20 one another and others that the Legislature finds that ensuring
21 meaningful access to services, programs, and activities for all
22 persons is a State priority; now, therefore,

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24 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
25 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
26 of 2018, the Senate concurring, that the State is urged to
27 address the lack of language support in services, programs, and
28 activities offered by State government for persons with limited
29 English proficiency; and

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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State shall make it a
32 priority to:

- 33
34 (1) Remove obstacles to promoting the hiring of bilingual
35 and multilingual persons in the State's workforce;
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37 (2) Promote and support the use and study of languages
38 other than English;
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40 (3) Expand the functional and active use of languages
41 commonly spoken in the State by persons in the
42 workforce;



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- 1 (4) Recognize language skills as critical workforce skills
- 2 that are essential to the State, the state economy,
- 3 and the health and well-being of the people of the
- 4 State;
- 5
- 6 (5) Promote an environment of aloha where the use of
- 7 languages other than English in any public setting is
- 8 welcomed, valued, and recognized as essential to
- 9 building relationships, social ties, and community
- 10 bonds; and
- 11
- 12 (6) Promote workplace training, public service campaigns,
- 13 and educational programs that address bias and
- 14 discrimination with respect to using languages other
- 15 than English in public; and
- 16

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 18 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Mayor of
 19 the City and County of Honolulu; Mayors of the Counties of
 20 Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui; Executive Director of the Hawaii Civil
 21 Rights Commission; Executive Director of the Disability and
 22 Communication Access Board; and Executive Director of the Office
 23 of Language Access.
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OFFERED BY:

<u><i>Della A. Keleti</i></u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
<u><i>John M. [Signature]</i></u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>



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