
HOUSE 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
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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
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29 WHEREAS, children with limited English proficiency face
30 significant challenges in gaining meaningful access to and
31 participating in social, educational, and recreational



1 opportunities when they are restricted by the lack of available
2 bilingual caregivers, school counselors, teachers, coaches, and
3 other adults who contribute to the development of their health
4 and educational success; and

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

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

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

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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State shall make it a
28 priority to:

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30 (1) Remove obstacles to promoting the hiring of bilingual
31 and multilingual persons in the State's workforce;
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33 (2) Promote and support the use and study of languages
34 other than English;
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36 (3) Expand the functional and active use of languages
37 commonly spoken in the State by persons in the
38 workforce;
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40 (4) Recognize language skills as critical workforce skills
41 that are essential to the State, the state economy,



and the health and well-being of the people of the State;

(5) Promote an environment of aloha where the use of languages other than English in any public setting is welcomed, valued, and recognized as essential to building relationships, social ties, and community bonds; and

(6) Promote workplace training, public service campaigns, and educational programs that address bias and discrimination with respect to using languages other than English in public; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu; Mayors of the Counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui; Executive Director of the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission; Executive Director of the Disability and Communication Access Board; and Executive Director of the Office of Language Access.

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