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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO IMMIGRATION.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there are many  
2 immigrants who seek to continue or obtain legal status in the  
3 country. However, the immigration court process is highly  
4 complex, which may be intimidating or overwhelming for  
5 immigrants who may struggle with navigating a different culture  
6 and language. Many immigrants may lack the resources to obtain  
7 legal representation, which may have a profound impact on the  
8 immigrants' ability to receive a fair hearing.

9           The legislature further finds that Hawaii has always  
10 embraced a welcoming attitude for people of all backgrounds,  
11 nationalities, and ethnicities. According to the 2017 American  
12 Immigration Council Fact Sheet, nearly eighteen percent of  
13 Hawaii residents are immigrants, while more than one in seven  
14 residents is a native-born United States citizen with at least  
15 one immigrant parent. Immigrants are an integral part of  
16 Hawaii's diverse, multicultural community and make extensive  
17 contributions to the State.



1           Given the current political climate and the number of  
2 immigrants being detained and faced with deportation, immigrants  
3 in Hawaii are in dire need of legal help. Therefore, there are  
4 vital public policy reasons behind providing legal assistance  
5 and legal counsel to immigrants in immigration proceedings.

6           Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate  
7 funds to the Department of Human Services to contract with non-  
8 profit providers to provide access to legal counsel to  
9 immigrants in immigration proceedings.

10           SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
11 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$100,000 or so much  
12 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the  
13 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
14 2020-2021 to the department of human services to contract with  
15 non-profit organizations to provide legal assistance and legal  
16 counsel to immigrants in immigration proceedings.

17           The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
18 of human services for the purposes of this Act.

19           SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.



**Report Title:**

Immigrants; Immigration Proceedings; Legal Counsel; Department of Human Services; Appropriation

**Description:**

Makes an appropriation to the Department of Human Services to contract with non-profit providers to provide access to legal counsel to immigrants in immigration proceedings. (SD1)

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