

JAN 22 2021

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that at least a dozen
2 states have enacted laws that recognize American Sign Language,
3 or ASL, as a distinct language with its own cultural heritage
4 and language rules and structure. Act 152, Session Laws of
5 Hawaii 2016, which recognized ASL as a world language for public
6 school language requirement purposes, was an important first
7 step, and this Act will advance the understanding and
8 acknowledgement that ASL is a discrete language and not merely
9 signed English.

10 The purpose of this Act is to recognize ASL as a fully
11 developed, autonomous, natural language with its own grammar,
12 syntax, vocabulary, and cultural heritage.

13 SECTION 2. Chapter 1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
14 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
15 read as follows:

16 "§1- American sign language. American sign language is
17 recognized as a fully developed, autonomous, natural language



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1 with its own distinct grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and cultural
2 heritage."

3 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

4 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

5

INTRODUCED BY: _____

Karl Rhoads



S.B. NO. 537

Report Title:

Deaf and Blind Task Force; American Sign Language; Recognition

Description:

Recognizes American Sign Language as a fully developed, autonomous, natural language with its own grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and cultural heritage.

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