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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Hawaiian  
2 language is Hawai'i's indigenous and first language, as well as  
3 the original language of Hawai'i's executive, judicial, and  
4 legislative branches. During his reign, King Kamehameha III  
5 famously declared, "He aupuni palapala ko'u", or "Mine is the  
6 kingdom of education", in reference to the high literacy rate in  
7 the Kingdom of Hawai'i. This level of literacy continued into  
8 the 1900s, as 95.3 per cent of Native Hawaiians were literate,  
9 according to the 1910 United States Census. However, due to a  
10 myriad of political, economic, and social pressures, the  
11 Hawaiian language was materially marginalized, leading to its  
12 atrophy and eventual formal and practical exclusion from public  
13 and civic spaces. Nevertheless, due to the Hawaiian language  
14 community's efforts and resilience, the existence of the  
15 Hawaiian language has been maintained and its vitality restored  
16 for future generations.



1       The legislature recognizes that Hawaiian language  
2 practitioners generally employ two written orthographies, namely  
3 unmarked language and marked language. The unmarked orthography  
4 was the first writing system of Hawaiian language. The marked  
5 orthography, which includes the kahakō and 'okina, was created as  
6 a means to help learners of Hawaiian language determine when to  
7 elongate a vowel or where to insert a glottal stop. The intent  
8 of this measure is not to claim the superiority of one version  
9 of orthography over the other, or to invalidate communities with  
10 an unbroken lineage of Hawaiian speakers who do not follow  
11 contemporary Hawaiian writing or structures, as communities such  
12 as these are vital to Native Hawaiian culture and the State as a  
13 whole. Rather, the intent of this measure is to establish a  
14 standard for the spelling and punctuation of Hawaiian names and  
15 words when they appear in letterhead created by state and county  
16 agencies for the purposes of consistency and uniformity.  
17 Furthermore, this Act is intended to provide equal support and  
18 standing for both native speakers and second language speakers  
19 of Hawaiian language.

20       Additionally, the intent of this Act is not to require that  
21 legislative bills and other official documents be written in



1 Hawaiian as well as English; rather, if letterhead prepared by  
2 or for state or county agencies or officials contain Hawaiian  
3 names and words, this Act only requires that the Hawaiian names  
4 and words be written in a consistent manner. This measure  
5 further clarifies that Hawaiian spelling not in conformance with  
6 the standards established by this measure will not invalidate an  
7 official document, nor will it allow a cause of action to arise.  
8 Finally, this Act requires a Hawaiian translation of the name of  
9 certain designated state officials to be prominently displayed  
10 on their respective official websites.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require all:

- 12 (1) Letterhead of the State and counties that include  
13 Hawaiian names and words to include Hawaiian names,  
14 words, and spelling consistent with certain  
15 references; and  
16 (2) Official letterhead stationary and websites of  
17 designated state officials to include the Hawaiian  
18 translation of the office's or department's name.

19 SECTION 2. Section 1-13.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
20 amended to read as follows:



1        "[+]§1-13.5[+] **Hawaiian language; spelling.** (a) ~~[Macrons~~  
2 ~~and glottal stops]~~ Kahakō and 'okina may be used in the spelling  
3 of words or terms in the Hawaiian language in documents prepared  
4 by or for state or county agencies or officials.

5        (b) Effective July 1, 2023, any letterhead prepared by or  
6 for state or county agencies or officials that contains names or  
7 words in the Hawaiian language shall use and spell the names and  
8 words consistently; provided that revisions to conform any  
9 letterhead existing before July 1, 2023, to the requirements of  
10 this section may be implemented when the letterhead requires  
11 replacement, reprinting, or otherwise requires revision.

12        (c) Any rule, order, policy, or other act, official or  
13 otherwise, that prohibits or discourages the use of [these  
14 symbols] kahakō and 'okina or the consistent use and spelling of  
15 Hawaiian names and words, as provided by this section, shall be  
16 void.

17        (d) For the purposes of consistency, any Hawaiian names  
18 and words used in letterhead subject to subsection (b) shall be  
19 printed in conformance with:



- 1        (1) "Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English, English-  
2        Hawaiian", by Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert,  
3        University of Hawai'i Press, copyright 1986;
- 4        (2) Any other commonly used Hawaiian-language dictionary;
- 5        (3) "Place Names of Hawaii", by Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel  
6        H. Elbert, and Esther T. Mookini, University of Hawai'i  
7        Press, copyright 1974, as revised and expanded in  
8        1976;
- 9        (4) Consultations from members of the Hawaiian-speaking  
10       language community, including native speakers;
- 11       (5) Consultations with the Hawaii board on geographic  
12       names for the names and spellings of geographic  
13       features in Hawaii; or
- 14       (6) The Hawaiian newspaper collection Nupepa Olelo Hawaii.
- 15       (e) Violation of this section shall not invalidate any  
16       document or render it unenforceable and shall provide no cause  
17       of action against the State; any county; or any state or county  
18       agency, official, or employee.
- 19       (f) If, in any document covered by this section, there is  
20       a conflict between words used by native speakers and second  
21       language speakers, two versions of the document may be made



1 available to the public upon request if the affected department  
2 has sufficient resources.

3 (g) For the purpose of this section, "native speakers"  
4 means speakers of the Hawaiian language who come from an  
5 unbroken lineage of primary speakers of the Hawaiian language."

6 SECTION 3. Section 5-6.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
7 amended to read as follows:

8 "[~~§~~5-6.5] **State language.** (a) The Hawaiian language  
9 is the native language of Hawaii and may be used on all emblems  
10 and symbols representative of the State~~[7]~~ and its departments,  
11 agencies, and political subdivisions.

12 (b) The governor, lieutenant governor, state legislators,  
13 and heads of the principal departments shall prominently display  
14 a Hawaiian translation of the name of their respective office or  
15 department at least once on the main page of their official  
16 website and in the letterhead of their stationary.

17 (c) This section shall not be construed to require the  
18 full text of legislative bills and other official documents to  
19 be written in Hawaiian."

20 SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
21 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.



**1** SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.



**Report Title:**

Hawaiian Language; Official Websites; Letterhead; Translation

**Description:**

Requires all letterhead of the State and counties to include consistent Hawaiian names, words, and spelling. Requires the governor, lieutenant governor, state legislators, and heads of principal departments to prominently display a Hawaiian translation of the name of their respective office or department at least once on the main page of their official website and in the letterhead of their stationary. (CD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

