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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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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 letterheads created by state and  
16 county agencies for the purposes of consistency and uniformity.

17       Additionally, the intent of this Act is not to require that  
18 legislative bills and other official documents be written in  
19 Hawaiian as well as English; rather, if letterheads prepared by  
20 or for state or county agencies or officials contain Hawaiian  
21 names and words, this Act only requires that the Hawaiian names



1 and words be written in a consistent manner. This measure  
2 further clarifies that Hawaiian spelling not in conformance with  
3 the standards established by this measure will not invalidate an  
4 official document, nor will it allow a cause of action to arise.  
5 Finally, this measure intends that consistent spelling and  
6 punctuation of Hawaiian names and words be used only for the  
7 letterheads of certain designated state officials created on or  
8 after January 1, 2023, or when there is a need to reprint or  
9 revise existing letterheads of certain designated state  
10 officials.

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

- 12 (1) All letterheads of the State and counties that include  
13 Hawaiian names and words to include Hawaiian names,  
14 words, spelling, and punctuation consistent with  
15 certain references;
- 16 (2) Official letterhead stationery and websites of  
17 designated state officials to include the Hawaiian  
18 translation of the office's or department's name; and
- 19 (3) The University of Hawaii to compile a full list of all  
20 dialects and other variations of the Hawaiian language  
21 currently in use.



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

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

(b) Effective January 1, 2023, all letterheads prepared by or for state or county agencies or officials, to the extent that the letterheads contain Hawaiian language names or words, those Hawaiian names and words shall be used consistently and the Hawaiian spelling and punctuation shall also be consistent, including kahakō and 'okina that punctuate the name or word to which they relate, except for letterheads specifically designed for the benefit of native speakers of Hawaiian; provided that any revision to conform any letterhead existing before January 1, 2023, to the requirements of this section may be implemented when the letterhead requires replacement or reprinting or otherwise requires revision; provided further that any document submitted to state or county agencies or officials by members of the general public shall not require the use of kahakō or 'okina.



1       (c) Any rule, order, policy, or other act, official or  
2 otherwise, that prohibits or discourages the use of [~~these~~  
3 ~~symbols~~] kahakō and 'okina or consistent Hawaiian names and  
4 words, as provided by this section, shall be void.

5       (d) For the purposes of consistency, Hawaiian names and  
6 words used in letterhead subject to subsection (b) shall be  
7 printed in conformance with:

8       (1) "Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English, English-  
9 Hawaiian", by Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert,  
10 University of Hawai'i Press, copyright 1986;

11       (2) "Māmaka Kaiao: A Modern Hawaiian Vocabulary",  
12 developed by the Kōmike Hua'ōlelo, the Hawaiian Lexicon  
13 Committee;

14       (3) "Place Names of Hawaii", by Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel  
15 H. Elbert, and Esther T. Mookini, University of Hawai'i  
16 Press, copyright 1974, as revised and expanded in  
17 1976;

18       (4) Any other commonly used Hawaiian-language dictionary,  
19 including dictionaries that account for the unique  
20 characteristics of the Ni'ihau dialect and other  
21 Hawaiian dialects; provided that this dictionary shall



only be used to determine consistency in any  
letterhead that is intended for use specifically in a  
community where a unique dialect is commonly used; or

(5) Consultations from members of the Hawaiian-speaking  
language community, including individuals who are  
fluent in the Ni'ihau dialect and other Hawaiian  
dialects; provided that this reference shall only be  
used to determine consistency in any letterhead that  
is intended for use specifically in a community where  
a unique dialect is commonly used.

(e) Any Hawaiian names and words that are spelled or  
punctuated inconsistently with subsection (d) within a  
letterhead subject to subsection (b) shall not be deemed to  
invalidate the document or render it unenforceable. No cause of  
action shall arise against the State, any county, or any state  
or county agency, official, or employee for any Hawaiian names  
and words that are spelled or punctuated inconsistently with  
subsection (d).

(f) For the purpose of this section, "native speakers" are  
speakers of the Hawaiian language who come from an unbroken  
lineage of primary speakers of the Hawaiian language."



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

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

(b) The governor, lieutenant governor, state legislators, and heads of the principal departments shall 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 stationery. The University of Hawai'i Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani or Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language may consult with each office or department before implementing the translation on the appropriate use of the Hawaiian language and its spelling. The University of Hawai'i shall consult with native speakers to determine the appropriate use of the Hawaiian language and its spelling in translations.

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



1        (d) For the purpose of this section, "native speakers" are  
2 speakers of the Hawaiian language who come from an unbroken  
3 lineage of primary speakers of the Hawaiian language."

4        SECTION 4. The University of Hawai'i shall compile a full  
5 list of all dialects and other variations in the Hawaiian  
6 language currently in use and shall submit a report of its  
7 findings to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to  
8 the convening of the regular session of 2023.

9        SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
10 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

11        SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2044.





**Report Title:**

Hawaiian Language; Official Websites; Letterhead; Translation;  
University of Hawaii

**Description:**

Requires all letterheads of the State and counties to include consistent Hawaiian names, spelling, and punctuation. Requires certain state officials to prominently display a Hawaiian language 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 stationery. Requires UH to compile a full list of all dialects and other variations in the Hawaiian language currently in use and submit a report of its findings to the legislature. Effective 7/1/2044. (HD2)

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

