
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 Hawaii's indigenous and first language, as well as
3 the original language of Hawaii'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 Hawaii. 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 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 letterheads 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 measure intends that consistent spelling and
9 punctuation of Hawaiian names and words be used only for the
10 letterheads of certain designated state officials created on or
11 after January 1, 2023, or when there is a need to reprint or
12 revise existing letterheads of certain designated state
13 officials.

14 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require all
15 letterheads of the State and counties that include Hawaiian
16 names and words to include Hawaiian names, words, spelling, and
17 punctuation consistent with certain references.

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

20 "[+]§1-13.5[+] **Hawaiian language; spelling.** (a) [Macrons
21 ~~and glottal stops~~] Kahakō and `okina may be used in the spelling



1 of words or terms in the Hawaiian language in documents prepared
2 by or for state or county agencies or officials.

3 (b) Effective January 1, 2023, any letterhead prepared by
4 or for state or county agencies or officials that contains names
5 or words in the Hawaiian language shall use and spell the names
6 and words consistently, including the consistent use of kahakō
7 and `okina diacritical marks; provided that:

8 (1) This section shall not apply to letterhead
9 specifically designed for use by native speakers of
10 Hawaiian;

11 (2) Revisions to conform any letterhead existing before
12 January 1, 2023, to the requirements of this section
13 may be implemented when the letterhead requires
14 replacement, reprinting, or otherwise requires
15 revision; and

16 (3) Documents submitted to state or county agencies or
17 officials by members of the general public shall not
18 be required to use kahakō or `okina.

19 (c) Any rule, order, policy, or other act, official or
20 otherwise, that prohibits or discourages the use of [~~these~~
21 ~~symbols~~] kahakō and `okina or the consistent use and spelling of



1 Hawaiian names and words, as provided by this section, shall be
2 void.

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

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

9 (2) Any other commonly used Hawaiian-language dictionary;

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

14 (4) Consultations from members of the Hawaiian-speaking
15 language community, including native speakers;

16 (5) Consultations with the Hawaii board on geographic
17 names for the names and spellings of geographic
18 features in Hawaii; or

19 (6) Historical documents, such as the Hawaiian newspaper
20 collection Nupepa Olelo Hawaii.



1 (e) Violation of this section shall not invalidate any
2 document or render it unenforceable and shall provide no cause
3 of action against the State; any county; or any state or county
4 agency, official, or employee.

5 (f) If, in any document covered by this section, there is
6 a conflict between words used by native speakers and second
7 language speakers, two versions of the document may be made
8 available to the public upon request if the affected department
9 has sufficient resources.

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

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

15 "**[+]§5-6.5[+] State language.** (a) The Hawaiian language
16 is the native language of Hawaii and may be used on all emblems
17 and symbols representative of the State[7] and its departments,
18 agencies, and political subdivisions.

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



1 SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

3 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2044.



Report Title:

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

Description:

Requires all letterhead of the State and counties to include
consistent Hawaiian names, spelling, and punctuation. Effective
7/1/2044. (SD2)

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not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

