
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING
FOR IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND REQUESTING DATA ON THE EFFECT
OF CASE BACKLOGS AND THE LACK OF FREE OR LOW-COST LEGAL
REPRESENTATION ON IMMIGRATION CASES FILED IN HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, office
2 closures, staff shortages, and other factors have exacerbated
3 already-significant delays in the processing of immigration
4 cases by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services;
5 and
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7 WHEREAS, the agency currently has a backlog of more than
8 nine million applications, including applications for work
9 permits, green cards, visas, asylum, protection from
10 deportation, and other immigration benefits; and
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12 WHEREAS, long processing times can cause major hardships
13 for already-vulnerable immigrants, who may be separated from
14 their families, unable to work, and otherwise trapped in limbo;
15 and
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17 WHEREAS, many immigrants also have limited, or no, access
18 to legal assistance, which poses an additional barrier to fair
19 and full participation in the United States immigration system;
20 and
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22 WHEREAS, Hawaii has a severe shortage of legal service
23 providers for low-income immigrants and currently has no
24 attorneys who are registered with the State's immigration courts
25 to provide free or low-cost immigration assistance; and
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27 WHEREAS, between 2016 and 2021, immigration court judges in
28 Hawaii denied approximately eighty-eight percent of asylum
29 seekers where the asylum seeker was not represented by an
30 attorney; now, therefore,
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1 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
2 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
3 of 2022, that the United States Congress is urged to provide
4 adequate funding for immigration services, including moneys for
5 additional United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
6 staff to process case backlogs and moneys for free or low-cost
7 court-appointed legal counsel for low-income immigrants,
8 including low-income immigrants in Hawaii; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Citizenship
11 and Immigration Services is requested to provide data to the
12 Legislature on the effect of existing case backlogs and the lack
13 of free or low-cost legal representation on immigration cases
14 filed in Hawaii, including the cases' average processing times
15 and outcomes and the applicants' nationalities and access to
16 legal representation; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
19 Resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of Homeland Security,
20 Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services,
21 Majority Leader of the United States Senate, Speaker of the
22 United States House of Representatives, members of Hawaii's
23 congressional delegation, and Executive Director of the
24 Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Office of Community
25 Services.
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OFFERED BY:



MAR 11 2022

