
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LEGAL SERVICES FOR LOW-INCOME IMMIGRANTS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there are many
2 immigrants and non-citizen residents from nations comprising the
3 Compact of Free Association in immigration related proceedings
4 who seek to continue legal residence or obtain legal status in
5 the country. However, the immigration court process is highly
6 complex, which may be intimidating or overwhelming for
7 immigrants who may struggle with navigating a different culture
8 and language. Many immigrants may lack the resources to obtain
9 legal representation, which may have a profound impact on the
10 immigrants' ability to receive a fair hearing.

11 To accurately effectuate the intent of this Act, as used
12 herein, the term "immigrant" shall include non-citizen residents
13 from nations comprising the Compact of Free Association.

14 The legislature further finds that Hawaii has always
15 embraced a welcoming attitude for people of all backgrounds,
16 nationalities, and ethnicities. According to the 2017 American
17 Immigration Council Fact Sheet, nearly eighteen per cent of



1 Hawaii residents are immigrants, while more than one in seven
2 residents is a native-born United States citizen with at least
3 one immigrant parent. Immigrants are an integral part of
4 Hawaii's diverse, multicultural community and make extensive
5 contributions to the State.

6 Given the current political climate and the number of
7 immigrants being detained and faced with deportation, immigrants
8 in Hawaii are in dire need of legal help. Therefore, there are
9 vital public policy reasons behind providing legal assistance
10 and legal counsel to immigrants in immigration proceedings.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
12 funds to the judiciary to contract with non-profit organizations
13 to provide legal counsel and assistance to low-income immigrants
14 in immigration related proceedings, including deportation
15 defense and asylum, and for any other immigration legal issues.

16 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$250,000 or so much
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the
19 judiciary to contract with non-profit organizations to provide
20 legal counsel and assistance to low-income immigrants in



1 immigrations related proceedings, including deportation defense
2 and asylum, and for any other immigration legal issues.

3 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary for
4 the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.



Report Title:

Judiciary; Immigrants; Immigration Proceedings; Legal Counsel;
Legal Assistance; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the judiciary to contract with non-profit organizations to provide legal counsel and assistance to low-income immigrants. (SD1)

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