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# 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 that have  
3 signed compacts of free association with the United States, in  
4 immigration-related proceedings who seek to continue legal  
5 residence or obtain legal status in the country. However, the  
6 immigration court process is highly complex, which may be  
7 intimidating or overwhelming for immigrants and non-citizens who  
8 may struggle with navigating a different culture and language.  
9 Many immigrants and non-citizens may lack the resources to  
10 obtain legal representation, which may have a profound impact on  
11 the person's ability to receive a fair hearing.

12           To accurately effectuate the intent of this Act, as used  
13 hereafter, the term "immigrant" shall include non-citizen  
14 residents from nations that have signed compacts of free  
15 association with the United States.

16           The legislature further finds that Hawaii has always  
17 embraced a welcoming attitude for people of all backgrounds,



1 nationalities, and ethnicities. According to the 2017 American  
2 Immigration Council Fact Sheet, nearly eighteen per cent of  
3 Hawaii residents are immigrants, while more than one in seven  
4 residents is a native-born United States citizen with at least  
5 one immigrant parent. Immigrants are an integral part of  
6 Hawaii's diverse, multicultural community and make extensive  
7 contributions to the State.

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

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

18         SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                 or so much  
20 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the  
21 judiciary to contract with nonprofit organizations to provide



1 legal counsel and assistance to low-income immigrants in  
2 immigrations related proceedings, including deportation defense  
3 and asylum, and for any other immigration legal issues.

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

6 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2088.



**Report Title:**

Judiciary; Immigrants; Compacts of Free Association; Immigration Proceedings; Legal Counsel; Legal Assistance; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to the judiciary to contract with nonprofit organizations to provide legal counsel and assistance to low-income immigrants. Effective 7/1/2088. (SD2)

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

