
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that one out of nine
2 persons living in Hawaii has limited proficiency in English.
3 This limitation often impedes those persons' access to important
4 benefits and services, including access to health care and other
5 public benefits; essential information during public health
6 emergencies, pandemics, or natural disasters; and access to
7 earned benefits, including unemployment benefits and workers'
8 compensation.

9 The legislature further finds that the office of language
10 access was created in 2006 to address these language barriers
11 through central coordination, technical assistance, and
12 administration of a language access resource center for the
13 benefit of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of
14 state government. Where a government entity fails to provide
15 language access, the office of language access is only
16 authorized to eliminate the language barrier through informal



1 methods including conferences, conciliation, mediation, and
2 persuasion.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

4 (1) Require the office of language access to submit an
5 annual report to the governor and legislature
6 regarding the compliance of state agencies and certain
7 other entities with state and federal language access
8 laws; and

9 (2) Appropriate funds to establish one full-time
10 equivalent (1.0 FTE) limited English proficiency
11 language coordinator position in the office of
12 language access; fund the operating expenses of the
13 office of language access for the purposes of this
14 Act; and for the office of language access to develop
15 a comprehensive statewide plan to increase language
16 access.

17 SECTION 2. Chapter 321C, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
18 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
19 and to read as follows:

20 "§321C- Annual report. The executive director shall
21 submit an annual written report to the governor and legislature



1 no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular
2 session. The report shall include information detailing the
3 compliance with this chapter by state agencies and covered
4 entities; complaints of noncompliance with this chapter, if any;
5 resolution of any of these complaints; and recommendations to
6 enhance and promote language access in the State."

7 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
9 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to
10 fund:

- 11 (1) The establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0
12 FTE) limited English proficiency language coordinator
13 position in the office of language access;
- 14 (2) The operating expenses of the office of language
15 access to collaborate with all state departments to
16 ensure compliance with all state and federal language
17 access laws; and
- 18 (3) The development by the office of language access of a
19 comprehensive statewide plan to increase language
20 access.



1 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of
2 language access for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

4 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2060.



Report Title:

Office of Language Access; Annual Report; Limited English Proficiency Language Coordinator; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Executive Director of the Office of Language Access to submit an annual report to the Governor and Legislature on the compliance of state agencies and certain entities with state and federal language access laws, complaints of noncompliance if any, resolution of the complaints, and recommendations on how to enhance and promote language access. Makes appropriations to fund the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Limited-English Proficiency Language Coordinator position in the Office of Language Access; the operating expenses of the Office of Language Access to collaborate with all state departments to ensure compliance with all state and federal language access laws; and the development by the Office of Language Access of a comprehensive statewide plan to increase language access. Effective 7/1/2060. (SD2)

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