
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 many noncitizens
2 seek to continue legal residence or obtain legal status in the
3 country. However, the immigration court process is highly
4 complex and may be intimidating or overwhelming for some
5 noncitizens, who may struggle with navigating a different
6 culture and language. Many noncitizens lack the resources to
7 obtain legal representation, which may have profound impacts on
8 their abilities to receive fair hearings.

9 The legislature further finds that Hawaii has always
10 embraced a welcoming attitude for people of all backgrounds,
11 nationalities, and ethnicities. According to the 2020 American
12 Immigration Council Fact Sheet, nearly one in five Hawaii
13 residents is an immigrant, while one in seven residents is a
14 native-born United States citizen having at least one immigrant
15 parent. Noncitizens are an integral part of Hawaii's diverse,
16 multicultural community and make extensive contributions to the
17 State.



1 Given the current political climate and the number of
2 noncitizens being detained and facing deportation, noncitizens
3 in Hawaii are in dire need of legal help. Therefore, there are
4 vital public policy reasons behind providing legal assistance
5 and legal counsel to noncitizens in immigration proceedings.

6 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
7 funds to the judiciary to contract with nonprofit organizations
8 to provide legal counsel and assistance to low-income
9 noncitizens in immigration proceedings, including deportation
10 defense and asylum, and for any other legal issues pertaining to
11 immigration.

12 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
13 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
14 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for
15 the judiciary to contract with nonprofit organizations to
16 provide legal counsel and assistance to low-income noncitizens
17 in immigration proceedings, including deportation defense and
18 asylum, and for any other legal issues pertaining to
19 immigration; provided that, for purposes of this Act,
20 "low-income" means a person whose family income does not exceed
21 the federal poverty level for a family of applicable size.



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

3 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on December 31,
4 2050.



S.B. NO. 2458
S.D. 2
H.D. 1

Report Title:

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

Description:

Appropriates moneys to the judiciary to contract with nonprofit organizations to provide legal counsel and assistance to low-income noncitizens. Defines "low-income" to mean a person whose family income is no more than the federal poverty level. Effective 12/31/2050. (HD1)

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