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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COURT INTERPRETERS.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that court interpreters  
2 are independent contractors of the judiciary who play an  
3 integral role in the administration of justice in the State.  
4 Hawaii has one of the largest populations of non-English  
5 speakers in the nation. The legislature further finds that  
6 court interpreters are often required to drive, sometimes for  
7 hours, to distant courthouses to provide interpretation services  
8 that are critical for a defendant with limited English  
9 proficiency to exercise the defendant's constitutional and  
10 statutory right to represent themselves in court or assist  
11 counsel.

12           The legislature finds however, that despite the substantial  
13 increase in the cost of living in Hawaii over the years,  
14 including considerable increases in the prices of automobiles  
15 and gasoline, the compensation for court interpreters has  
16 remained largely unchanged since it was established in 2007.



1 The legislature therefore finds that an increase in the fees and  
2 rates for court interpreters is overdue.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the  
4 judiciary to:

5 (1) Conduct a study of interpreter fees and submit its  
6 findings and recommendations to the chief justice  
7 beginning in 2026 and every three years thereafter;  
8 and

9 (2) Increase the hourly fees, mileage reimbursement rate,  
10 and commuter-time compensation rate for court  
11 interpreters to reflect the significant increase in  
12 the cost of living in Hawaii.

13 SECTION 2. Chapter 606, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
14 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
15 and to read as follows:

16 "§606- Study for annual adjustments of fees for  
17 interpreters. Beginning in 2026 and every three years  
18 thereafter, the judiciary shall conduct a study of interpreter  
19 fees, including the impact of changes to the State's consumer  
20 price index and recommendations on adjustments to the fee rates,



1 and submit its findings and recommendations to the chief justice  
2 for consideration."

3 SECTION 3. The judiciary shall amend its rules and  
4 policies governing compensation for court interpreters by:

5 (1) Increasing the hourly fees for court interpreters as  
6 follows:

7 (A) Tier 1 court interpreters from \$25 to \$40;

8 (B) Tier 2 court interpreters from \$35 to \$50;

9 (C) Tier 3 court interpreters from \$40 to \$60;

10 (D) Tier 4 court interpreters from \$45 to \$70;

11 (E) Tier 5 court interpreters from \$50 to \$80; and

12 (F) Tier 6 court interpreters from \$55 to \$90;

13 provided that the hourly fees set forth in this  
14 paragraph shall be amended on July 1 of each year to  
15 reflect the increase in the State's consumer price  
16 index, as measured by the Honolulu consumer price  
17 index for the preceding year;

18 (2) Adjusting its mileage reimbursement rate based on the  
19 Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate on  
20 January 1 of each year; and



1 (3) Amending its commuter-time compensation rate for court  
2 interpreters who travel one hundred fifty miles or  
3 more for one assignment to receive three-hours of  
4 their hourly fees as commuter-time compensation for  
5 the assignment.

6 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
8 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and  
9 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
10 year 2024-2025 to fund the increase in the hourly fees, mileage  
11 reimbursement rate, and commuter-time compensation rate for  
12 court interpreters pursuant to this Act.

13 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary  
14 for the purposes of this Act.

15 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

Court Interpreters; Study; Hourly Fees; Mileage Reimbursement Rate; Commuter Compensation Rate; Judiciary; Appropriation

**Description:**

Beginning in 2026 and every three years thereafter, requires the judiciary to conduct a study on interpreter fees. Requires the judiciary to increase the hourly fees, mileage reimbursement rate, and commuter-time compensation rate for court interpreters. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD1)

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