

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 04 2023

RE: H.B. No. 834
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred H.B. No. 834, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to recognize American Sign Language as a fully developed, autonomous, natural language with its own grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and cultural heritage.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission, Parent Community Network for the Hearing Parents of Deaf Children at the Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind, and eleven individuals.

Your Committee finds that American Sign Language (ASL) is not just a translation of spoken English, but a fully developed, autonomous, natural language with its own grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and cultural heritage. Your Committee further finds that by recognizing ASL as a distinct language, the State can help promote a more inclusive society, acknowledge the deaf community's right to access services and information in a language they understand, increase public awareness, and acknowledge the deaf community as a linguistic minority with its own history, culture, and traditions. Your Committee notes that at least a dozen states



have already enacted laws that recognize ASL as its own distinct language, with many other states recognizing ASL in varying degrees. Therefore, this measure calls upon the State to formally recognize ASL as its own distinct language.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 834, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, and recommends that it pass Third Reading.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



