

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1573

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 04 2023

RE: S.R. No. 26
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 Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.R. No. 26 entitled:

"SENATE RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS TO ESTABLISH AN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER WORKFORCE WORKING GROUP TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN THE STATE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Request the Office of Language Access to convene an American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter Workforce Working Group for the purpose of promoting the increase of ASL interpreters in the State; and
- (2) Request the working group to:
 - (A) Recommend training and incentives to increase the number of ASL interpreters in the State;
 - (B) Submit an interim report to the Legislature before the Regular Session of 2024 and a final report before Regular Session of 2026; and
 - (C) Dissolve on June 30, 2026.



Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Disability and Communication Access Board and two individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Office of Language Access.

Your Committee finds that ASL interpreters provide a critical service to deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and hearing individuals and public agencies in the State who wish to effectively communicate with each other in a variety of settings and circumstances. Your Committee also finds that there is an insufficient number of qualified ASL interpreters to accommodate current needs in the State. This measure serves as an essential step to increase the number of qualified ASL interpreters in the State.

Your Committee acknowledges the concerns raised by the Office of Language Access regarding its lack of expertise in the area of ASL to chair the working group. Your Committee also acknowledges the testimony of the Disability and Communication Access Board suggesting that the Board is better situated to assume that role, as its functions include establishing administrative rules for the utilization of communication access services, including ASL interpreting, in State programs and activities and issuing Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credentials to qualified interpreters.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

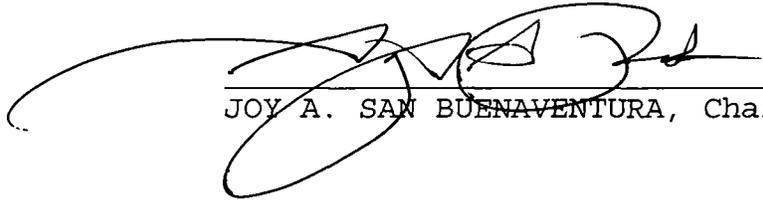
- (1) Requesting the Disability and Communication Access Board, rather than the Office of Language Access, to convene the American Sign Language Interpreter Workforce Working Group;
- (2) Requesting a representative from the Disability and Communication Access Board, rather than the Office of Language Access, to serve as chairperson of the working group;
- (3) Updating the list of certified copy recipients;
- (4) Amending its title to reflect its amended purpose; and



- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.R. No. 26, as amended herein, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto as S.R. No. 26, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



