

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 17 2023

RE: S.B. No. 610

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.B. No. 610 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.

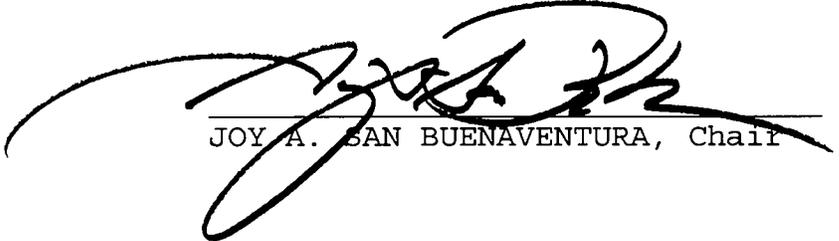
Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission, Disability and Communication Access Board, Hawaii Disability Rights Center, and eight individuals.

Your Committee finds that over forty states recognize American Sign Language (ASL) in varying degrees, with at least a dozen states enacting laws to acknowledge ASL as its own distinct language. Your Committee believes ASL is a prominent language that serves as the backbone of the United States' deaf and hard-of-hearing population, including residents of Hawaii. Your Committee further finds that recognizing ASL as a distinct language will allow more equitable access in numerous areas, including employment, public awareness, and civic participation. Therefore, this measure aims to advance public understanding and recognition that ASL is a discrete language with its own grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and cultural heritage.



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 is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 610 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary.

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



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



