

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **3552**

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 03 2024

RE: S.R. No. 37

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.R. No. 37 entitled:

"SENATE RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE IN THE STATE THROUGH THE PROVISION OF LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to request the Department of Health to convene a stakeholder working group to make recommendations to enhance meaningful access to health care in the State through the provision of language assistance services.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Language Access, AlohaCare, Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, Pacific Gateway Center, Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, Language Services Hawaii, Hawai'i Medical Service Association, and three individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Healthcare Association of Hawaii.

Your Committee finds that effective communication is crucial in health care and human services to prevent misdiagnosis, delayed medical treatment, and barriers to necessary services and



programs. Your Committee finds however, that limited English proficient (LEP) individuals and individuals living with physical disabilities face barriers in equitably accessing health care when language assistance and translation services are not provided, as evidenced during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic when communities having high numbers of LEP residents experienced higher rates of incidence and mortality. This measure will facilitate a discussion among stakeholders, including health care providers, insurers, representatives of community-based organizations, and language service providers, to make recommendations to the Legislature to ensure that all individuals in the State requiring language assistance services have meaningful access to health care.

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. 37 and recommends its adoption.

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



Joy A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



