

JAN 24 2024

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that American Sign
2 Language (ASL) interpreters provide a critical service to deaf,
3 hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and hearing individuals, and public
4 agencies in the State, who wish to effectively communicate with
5 each other in a variety of settings and circumstances. Despite
6 the increase in requests for ASL interpreting services, there
7 has been increased difficulty in the recruitment of individuals
8 who are qualified to serve as ASL interpreters.

9 The legislature further finds that there remains a critical
10 need to develop an ASL interpreter workforce and additional
11 information on the current condition of ASL in Hawaii would help
12 provide a firm foundation to address other current and future
13 issues relating to this critical service.

14 Accordingly, to ensure greater access for individuals to
15 receive ASL interpretation services in the state during
16 emergencies and daily life activities, the purpose of this Act
17 is to require the disability and communication access board and



1 department of human services division of vocational
2 rehabilitation to convene a working group to study the state of
3 American Sign Language in Hawaii.

4 SECTION 2. (a) The disability and communication access
5 board and the department of human services division of
6 vocational rehabilitation shall convene a working group to:

- 7 (1) Study the state of American Sign Language in Hawaii;
8 and
9 (2) Investigate and study any means, methods, processes,
10 or systems that might improve the provision of
11 American Sign Language services in the State.

12 (b) The working group's membership shall include the
13 following members:

- 14 (1) A representative from the disability and communication
15 access board, who shall serve as co-chairperson of the
16 working group;
17 (2) A representative from the department of human services
18 division of vocational rehabilitation, who shall serve
19 as co-chairperson of the working group;
20 (3) A representative from the department of education;
21 (4) A member of the deaf and blind taskforce;



1 (5) A professor from the university of Hawaii who teaches
2 American Sign Language;

3 (6) An individual who currently serves as an American Sign
4 Language interpreter, who shall be invited by the co-
5 chairpersons of the working group; and

6 (7) Additional representatives invited by the co-
7 chairpersons of the working group.

8 (c) The working group, with the assistance of the
9 department of health, shall submit a report of its findings and
10 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
11 legislature no later than December 31, 2024.

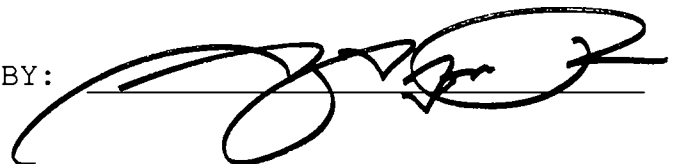
12 (d) The working group shall be dissolved on June 30, 2025.

13 (e) The members of the working group shall serve without
14 compensation, but shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses
15 incurred, including travel expenses. No member of the working
16 group shall be made subject to chapter 84, Hawaii Revised
17 Statutes, solely because of that member's participation as a
18 member of the working group.

19 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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S.B. NO. 3290

Report Title:

DHS; DCAB; DOH; Working Group; American Sign Language;
Interpreters; Report

Description:

Requires the Disability and Communication Access Board and Department of Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to convene a working group to study the state of American Sign Language in Hawaii. Requires the Department of Health to assist the working group in the preparation of a report to submit to the Legislature.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

