

MAR 08 2024

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REQUIRE THAT EACH STUDENT COMPLETE TWO YEARS OF HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AS A GRADUATION REQUIREMENT.

1 WHEREAS, olelo Hawaii, the Hawaiian language, is the native
2 language of the Native Hawaiian people; and

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4 WHEREAS, once spoken throughout Hawaii by Native Hawaiians
5 and others, olelo Hawaii was considered to be nearly extinct by
6 the 1980s, when fewer than fifty fluent speakers under the age
7 of eighteen were left; and

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9 WHEREAS, a major reason for the deterioration of the
10 Hawaiian language was an 1896 law that required English
11 instruction in Hawaii schools; and

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13 WHEREAS, in practice, this law functioned to "ban" students
14 from speaking olelo Hawaii at their schools; and

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16 WHEREAS, to save the Hawaiian language, a number of
17 historic initiatives were launched, including Aha Punana Leo's
18 Hawaiian language immersion preschools, the Department of
19 Education's Hawaiian language immersion program, and the
20 Hawaiian language programs of the University of Hawaii system;
21 and

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23 WHEREAS, in 1978, the Hawaii State Constitution was amended
24 to recognize the Hawaiian language as one of the two official
25 languages of the State; and

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27 WHEREAS, several important gubernatorial proclamations on
28 olelo Hawaii were issued in the 1990s, including in 1994 and
29 1995, gubernatorial proclamations, written in both Hawaiian and
30 English, recognizing February 1994 and February 1995 as
31 "Hawaiian Language Month in Hawaii"; and

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33 WHEREAS, while the Hawaiian language revitalization
34 movement has made major strides in the last thirty years, for



1 olelo Hawaii to not just survive, but to also thrive, more
2 people need to speak Hawaiian; now, therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024,
6 that the Department of Education is requested to require that
7 each student complete two years of Hawaiian language instruction
8 as a graduation requirement; and

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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
11 Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education and
12 Chairperson of the Board of Education.

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OFFERED BY:

Kurt Fenello

