

MAR 07 2024

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT A HAWAIIAN
LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION
REQUIREMENTS, CONSISTENT WITH EXISTING ENGLISH GRADUATION
REQUIREMENTS

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 foreigners alike, olelo Hawaii was considered to be nearly
6 extinct by the 1980s, when fewer than fifty fluent speakers
7 under the age 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 Constitution was amended to
24 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 gubernatorial
29 proclamations in 1994 and 1995, written in both Hawaiian and
30 English, that were issued recognizing February 1994 and February
31 1995 as "Hawaiian Language Month in Hawaii"; and
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33 WHEREAS, the proclamations urged people to participate in
34 Hawaiian language activities held in February; and



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WHEREAS, while the Hawaiian language revitalization movement has made major strides in the last thirty years, for olelo Hawaii to not just survive, but also to thrive, more people need to speak Hawaiian; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, that the Department of Education is urged to implement a Hawaiian language requirement as part of the high school graduation requirements, consistent with existing English graduation requirements; and

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

OFFERED BY: Kurt Fenech

