
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that language access is
2 essential to ensuring equitable access to education, healthcare,
3 legal services, agriculture, emergency and other government
4 programs for Hawaii's diverse communities. Hawaii's large
5 multilingual population requires a trained and culturally
6 competent workforce of translators and interpreters.

7 The legislature commends the department of education for
8 recognizing high school graduates with the seal of biliteracy.
9 These students who have demonstrated proficiency in English and
10 at least one additional language represent a valuable pipeline
11 for meeting the State's language access and workforce needs.

12 The legislature further finds that providing a structured
13 pathway, including training and paid internship opportunities,
14 would develop qualified bilingual workers to strengthen
15 workforce development, expand language access services, and
16 create meaningful career opportunities.



1 The legislature also finds that this issue is a matter of
2 statewide concern pursuant to article X, section 6, of the
3 Hawaii State Constitution.

4 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to establish a
5 program that enables eligible high school graduates who have
6 earned the seal of biliteracy and members of the community with
7 demonstrated biliteral competency to be recognized as qualified
8 translators and interpreters.

9 SECTION 2. (a) There is established at the university of
10 Hawaii the language access education and workforce development
11 program to provide a curriculum to train eligible participants
12 to be recognized as qualified translators and interpreters.

13 (b) The curriculum of the language access education and
14 workforce development program shall provide training in
15 translation and interpretation, including ethics, standards, and
16 best practices.

17 (c) Participants in the language access education and
18 workforce development program shall complete educational
19 requirements, including internship opportunities through the
20 hele imua program of the department of labor and industrial
21 relations.



6 (e) Participants who have successfully completed the
7 curriculum and met the requirements of the language access
8 education and workforce development program shall receive a
9 certificate of completion and shall be recognized as qualified
10 in translation and interpretation proficiency.

11 (f) The language access education and workforce
12 development program shall be provided statewide and shall be
13 administered by the university of Hawaii in collaboration with
14 the department of education, the department of labor and
15 industrial relations, and other relevant public and private
16 entities.

17 (g) The language access education and workforce
18 development program shall be administered by the SEED office of
19 the university of Hawaii at Manoa in cooperation with academic
20 departments of the university of Hawaii at Manoa and all
21 campuses of the university of Hawaii system.



1 (h) Priority for acceptance into the language access
2 education and workforce development program shall be given to
3 students who have received the seal of biliteracy from the
4 department of education.

5 Other applicants to the program shall demonstrate
6 proficiency in English and at least one additional language, as
7 determined by:

8 (1) Standards developed by the language access education
9 and workforce development program; or
10 (2) Testing through the Global Seal of Biliteracy program.

11 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
13 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for
14 the language access education and workforce development program
15 established by section 2 of this Act, including for three full-
16 time equivalent (3.0 FTE) positions.

17 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the university of
18 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.



H.B. NO. *2005*

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INTRODUCED BY:

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JAN 23 2026



H.B. NO. 2005

Report Title:

Filipino Caucus; Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program; University of Hawaii; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a statewide language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawaii. Appropriates funds.

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