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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII.

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

1        SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii faces a  
2 growing shortage of qualified American Sign Language  
3 interpreters. The 2024 report by the disability and  
4 communication access board, Assessment of American Sign Language  
5 Interpreting Services and the Interpreter Shortage in Hawaii,  
6 recommends establishing an American Sign Language interpreter  
7 training program within the university of Hawaii system.

8        The legislature further finds that Hawaii is one of only  
9 eight states that does not have an American Sign Language  
10 interpreter training program. More than two hundred  
11 certificate, associate, bachelor, and graduate level interpreter  
12 training programs are offered nationwide.

13       The legislature believes that establishing a bachelor's  
14 degree program in sign language interpretation with a multi-year  
15 plan to include a master's degree program will eliminate the  
16 shortage of American Sign Language interpreters in the State and



1 provide an academic and career path for Hawaii residents to  
2 become skilled professionals.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to address the  
4 State's American Sign Language interpreter shortage by  
5 appropriating moneys to establish a bachelor's degree program in  
6 American Sign Language interpretation at the university of  
7 Hawaii at Manoa campus with a multi-year plan to include a  
8 master's degree program.

9 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$140,000 or so much  
11 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to:

12 (1) Establish a bachelor's degree program in American Sign  
13 Language interpretation at the university of Hawaii  
14 Manoa campus;

15 (2) Develop a multi-year interpreter training program to  
16 include a master's degree in American Sign Language  
17 interpretation; and

18 (3) Provide personnel and administrative resources  
19 necessary to launch and sustain the programs.

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



1 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

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INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 28 2026



# H.B. NO. 2489

**Report Title:**

University of Hawaii; ASL Interpreter Training Program;  
Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates moneys to establish a bachelor's degree program in American Sign Language interpretation at the University of Hawaii Manoa campus with a multi-year plan to include a master's degree program for interpreter training.

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

