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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING.

**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 to the legislature entitled  
4 *Assessment of American Sign Language Interpreting Services and*  
5 *the Interpreter Shortage in Hawaii*, submitted by the Department  
6 of Health, Disability and Communication Access Board recommended  
7 establishing an American Sign Language interpreter training  
8 program within the university of Hawaii system.

9       The legislature further finds that while there are over two  
10 hundred certificate, associate, bachelor, and graduate level  
11 interpreter training programs nationwide, Hawaii is one of only  
12 eight states which does not have an interpreter training  
13 program.

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



1 academic and career path for state residents to become skilled  
2 professionals.

3 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the  
4 establishment of a bachelor of arts degree in sign language  
5 interpretation with a multi-year plan to include a master's  
6 program at the university of Hawaii at Manoa.

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

10 (1) Establish a bachelor of arts degree in sign language  
11 interpretation at the university of Hawaii at Manoa  
12 campus;

13 (2) Develop a multi-year plan to include a master's degree  
14 in sign language interpretation;

15 (3) Fund additional personnel associated with the  
16 establishment of the interpreter training program; and

17 (4) Purchase related supplies and equipment.

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

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



H.B. NO. 2588

INTRODUCED BY:

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JAN 28 2026



# H.B. NO. 2588

**Report Title:**

American Sign Language; Interpreter Training Program;  
Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes an American Sign Language Program at the University of Hawaii and appropriates funding for the program.

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

