

# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO.

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

1 PART I

2 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Act 315, Session  
3 Laws of Hawaii 1997, mandated the establishment of a Hawaiian  
4 language college at the university of Hawaii at Hilo. The  
5 language college subsequently played a major role in developing  
6 the Imiloa astronomy center to provide bilingual  
7 Hawaiian-English science education to the community. The Imiloa  
8 center provides outreach and science education from perspectives  
9 emanating from Hawaii's distinctive local and indigenous culture  
10 and history. Since its establishment, the Imiloa center has  
11 worked with the college of Hawaiian language to produce a fully  
12 integrated education program, including preschool, kindergarten  
13 to grade twelve, a baccalaureate degree, a teacher certification  
14 program, a master's degree, and a doctoral program. The Imiloa  
15 center's educational programs also include direct outreach to  
16 the general public using both technology and in-person learning.



1 It is the only fully integrated bilingual education program of  
2 its kind in Hawaii.

3 The legislature further finds that the bilingual work of  
4 the college of Hawaiian language and Imiloa center is especially  
5 important to the State, because the State has two official  
6 languages. The State's schools offer both an English-language-  
7 medium education pathway and a Hawaiian-language-medium  
8 education pathway from infant and toddler programs to doctoral  
9 degrees. Act 46, Session Laws of Hawaii 2020, appropriated  
10 moneys to the Imiloa center and college of Hawaiian language to  
11 help establish a pathway for the development of Hawaiian-  
12 language-medium early education. The college of Hawaiian  
13 language developed an early education certificate taught  
14 entirely in the Hawaiian language and based on Hawaiian  
15 grounded, scientifically researched concepts of childhood  
16 development and cognitive development. Imiloa center has also  
17 provided educational outreach to the State's students using  
18 innovative approaches and unique delivery methods that help  
19 advance Hawaii's goal of expanding Hawaiian-language-medium  
20 early education within the State.



1       The legislature recognizes that the Imiloa center  
2       identifies Hawaiian language proficiency development as a  
3       bottleneck in the development of Hawaiian-language-medium early  
4       education teachers. The United States Foreign Service estimates  
5       that Hawaiian-language proficiency requires approximately one  
6       thousand one hundred hours of study. This amount is much more  
7       than the standard number of hours currently allocated to  
8       Hawaiian language in most degree programs outside of the degree  
9       programs at the college of Hawaiian language. Standard models  
10       for learning a second language and the limited scheduling of  
11       Hawaiian language courses in the State's high schools and  
12       universities both present challenges to the development of  
13       Hawaiian-language-medium early education teachers who are  
14       proficient in Hawaiian.

15       The legislature believes that implementing an institute  
16       model for Hawaiian education at the university of Hawaii at Hilo  
17       would allow the Imiloa center's year-round scheduling  
18       flexibility to extend to the college of Hawaiian language and  
19       would give the center and college greater opportunities to  
20       develop Hawaiian language proficiency and Hawaiian-language-  
21       medium early education sites and programs.



1       The legislature also recognizes that the university of  
2       Hawaii at Hilo leads the federally designated National Native  
3       American Language Resource Center. This role gives the Imiloa  
4       center and college of Hawaiian language unique access to offer  
5       coursework, training, consultations, materials, and other  
6       services to federal agencies, other states, tribal nations, and  
7       mainland communities. Therefore, the development of an  
8       institute of indigenous education at the university of Hawaii at  
9       Hilo is a matter of both national and statewide concern.

10       The legislature believes that implementing an institute  
11       model for Hawaiian language education at the university of  
12       Hawaii at Hilo is crucial to the development of a Hawaiian-  
13       language-medium early education pathway and would help reduce  
14       the State's significant shortage of Hawaiian-language-medium  
15       education teachers. It would also expand the reach of the  
16       college of Hawaiian language and Imiloa center to help address  
17       the State's and individual communities' Hawaiian language needs.  
18       The institute would also serve as a model for language education  
19       for other indigenous and marginalized groups, demonstrating how  
20       to offer high-quality education from a distinctive language  
21       base.



1       Accordingly, the purpose of this part is to establish an  
2       institute of indigenous education, science, and outreach within  
3       the university of Hawaii at Hilo through a collaboration between  
4       the university of Hawaii at Hilo Imiloa astronomy center and  
5       university of Hawaii at Hilo college of Hawaiian language. The  
6       institute shall operate as a distinct unit within the university  
7       of Hawaii with flexibility as it relates to scheduling,  
8       outreach, and functionality.

9           SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
10       amended by adding a new subpart to part IV to be appropriately  
11       designated and to read as follows:

12       " . Institute of Indigenous Education, Science, and Outreach

13       **§304A-       Institute of indigenous education, science, and**  
14       **outreach; established.** There is established the institute of  
15       indigenous education, science, and outreach. The institute  
16       shall be placed within the university of Hawaii at Hilo through  
17       a collaboration between the university of Hawaii at Hilo Imiloa  
18       astronomy center and university of Hawaii at Hilo college of  
19       Hawaiian language; provided that the institute shall have  
20       flexibility as it relates to scheduling, outreach, and



1 functionality; provided further that the institute may establish  
2 appropriate fees for its services and products.

3 **§304-** **Functions.** The institute of indigenous  
4 education, science, and outreach shall:

5 (1) Develop and strengthen the Hawaiian language education  
6 pathway, from infant and toddler education programs  
7 through doctoral degree programs, in cooperation with  
8 partners like Aha Punana Leo, Inc.;

9 (2) Provide language education services to other  
10 indigenous language and autochthonous language groups,  
11 including Native American tribal nations;

12 (3) Provide outreach to Hawaiians, and other former  
13 residents with distinctive ties to the State, who now  
14 live outside Hawaii; and

15 (4) Provide outreach to scientific institutions, museums,  
16 educational organizations, governmental entities, and  
17 others regarding indigenous community engagement and  
18 the importance of representation for indigenous  
19 peoples, languages, and cultures.

20 **§304A-** **Patents, copyrights, inventions, discoveries,**  
21 **and other rights.** Any patents, copyrights, inventions,



1 discoveries, or other rights arising from activities of the  
2 institute of indigenous education, science, and outreach shall  
3 belong to the institute and shall be subject to policies or  
4 rules adopted by the board of regents."

## PART II

**6** SECTION 3. The purpose of this part is to:

7 (1) Authorize the Hawaiian language college revolving fund  
8 to receive moneys from any revenue source and be used  
9 to support the university of Hawaii at Hilo Imiloa  
10 astronomy center;

11 (2) Require the Hawaiian early learning trust fund to be  
12 used for the Hawaiian-language-medium education  
13 pathway; and

14 (3) Prohibit the university of Hawaii from limiting the  
15 amount of revenue deposited into either fund and  
16 establish a cap on individual deposits into both  
17 funds.

18 SECTION 4. Section 304A-2270, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
19 amended to read as follows:

20        "[§304A-2270] Hawaiian language college revolving  
21    fund. (a) There is established the Hawaiian language college



1 revolving fund into which revenues from ~~the sale of Hawaiian~~  
2 ~~language materials~~ any source, including training and personal  
3 development, evaluation services, sale of products, translation  
4 services, and consultation, shall be deposited. Moneys  
5 deposited into this fund shall be expended to support the  
6 Hawaiian language college at the University of Hawaii at Hilo  
7 established under section ~~[+]304A-1301[+]~~ and the Imiloa  
8 astronomy center of Hawaii.

9 (b) The amount of revenue deposited into the fund shall  
10 not be limited by the university of Hawaii; provided that the  
11 total of any individual deposit shall not exceed \$499,999."

12 SECTION 5. Section 304A-2356, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
13 amended to read as follows:

14 "[+]S304A-2356[+] Hawaiian early learning trust fund. (a)

15 There is established the Hawaiian early learning trust fund,  
16 into which shall be deposited:

17 (1) Donations to the fund;

18 (2) Appropriations made by the legislature to the fund;

19 (3) Revenues regardless of their source; and

20 (4) Earnings on moneys in the fund.



6 (c) The university of Hawaii shall submit an annual report  
7 to the legislature, no later than August 31, on the sources of  
8 moneys deposited into the fund and expenditures of moneys from  
9 the fund.

10                   (d) The amount of revenue deposited into the fund shall  
11                   not be limited by the university of Hawaii; provided that the  
12                   total of any individual deposit shall not exceed \$499,999."

### PART III

14 SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
15 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

**16** SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

17

INTRODUCED BY:

JAN 28 2026



# H.B. NO. 2617

**Report Title:**

UH Hilo; College of Hawaiian Language; Institute of Indigenous Education, Science, and Outreach; Imiloa Astronomy Center; Hawaiian Language; Hawaiian Early Learning; Revolving Fund; Trust Fund; Uses

**Description:**

Establishes the Institute of Indigenous Education, Science, and Outreach within the University of Hawaii at Hilo. Authorizes the Hawaiian Language College Revolving Fund to include moneys from any revenue source and requires expenditures in the fund to be used to support the Imiloa Astronomy Center. Requires the Hawaiian Early Learning Trust Fund to support the Hawaiian-Language-Medium Education Pathway. Establishes a cap on individual deposits into the Hawaiian Language College Revolving Fund and the Hawaiian Early Learning Trust Fund.

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

