

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3761

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 10 2026

RE: H.B. No. 2433
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred H.B. No. 2433, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to require that priority be given to the language of a law that aligns with the intent of the Legislature if there is a difference between the English and Hawaiian versions of the law that is material to its interpretation.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Judiciary, University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, and two individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Your Committee finds that the Hawaii State Constitution recognizes both 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and English as official languages of the State. However, a statutory preference for English exists. Your Committee further finds that other jurisdictions that operate within a bilingual legal framework provide both languages with equal authority and require courts to resolve discrepancies by identifying the meaning that best reflects legislative intent.



This measure removes the existing statutory preference for the English version and replaces it with an intent-based standard that treats both languages with equal dignity while ensuring clarity and long-term stability in statutory interpretation.

Your Committee notes the concern raised by the University of Hawai'i at Hilo that amending statutory language to establish that English and Hawaiian "shall be", rather than "are" the official languages of the State may create unintended ambiguity about the settled status of Hawaiian as an official language. Thus, amendments to this measure are necessary to address this concern.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Restoring statutory language specifying that English and Hawaiian are the official languages of the State; and
- (2) Inserting an effective date of March 22, 2075, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2433, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2433, H.D. 1, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



