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# 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, health  
3 care, legal services, agriculture, and emergency and other  
4 government programs for Hawaii's diverse communities. Hawaii's  
5 large 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. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
10 amended by adding a new section to part IV, subpart M, to be  
11 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

12 **"§304A- Language access education and workforce**  
13 **development program; established.** (a) There is established at  
14 the university of Hawaii the language access education and  
15 workforce development program to provide a curriculum to train  
16 eligible participants to be recognized as qualified translators  
17 and interpreters.

18 (b) The curriculum of the language access education and  
19 workforce development program shall provide training in  
20 translation and interpretation, including ethics, standards, and  
21 best practices.



1       (c) Participants in the language access education and  
2 workforce development program shall complete educational  
3 requirements, including opportunities through the hele imua  
4 internship program of the department of labor and industrial  
5 relations.

6       (d) The language access education and workforce  
7 development program shall provide specialized instruction and  
8 opportunities for interpretation in public service settings,  
9 including but not limited to education, health care, social  
10 services, law, agriculture, and government.

11       (e) Participants who have successfully completed the  
12 curriculum and met the requirements of the language access  
13 education and workforce development program shall receive a  
14 certificate of completion and shall be recognized as qualified  
15 in translation and interpretation proficiency.

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



1        (g) The language access education and workforce  
2 development program shall be administered by the SEED office of  
3 the university of Hawaii at Manoa in cooperation with academic  
4 departments of the university of Hawaii at Manoa and all  
5 campuses of the university of Hawaii system.

6        (h) Priority for acceptance into the language access  
7 education and workforce development program shall be given to  
8 students who have received the seal of biliteracy from the  
9 department of education.

10       (i) Other applicants to the program shall demonstrate  
11 proficiency in English and at least one additional language, as  
12 determined by:

13       (1) Standards developed by the language access education  
14 and workforce development program; or

15       (2) Testing through the Global Seal of Biliteracy  
16 program."

17       SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                    or so  
19 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for  
20 the language access education and workforce development program  
21 established by section 2 of this Act, including for the



1 establishment of full-time equivalent ( FTE)  
2 positions.

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

5 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 31, 2055.



**Report Title:**

Filipino Caucus; UH; Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program; Positions; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes a statewide Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawaii. Establishes positions and appropriates funds. Effective 7/31/2055. (SD1)

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

