
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, emergency services, agricultural programs,
4 and government programs for Hawaii's diverse communities.

5 Hawaii's multilingual population requires a trained and
6 culturally 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 workforce needs.

12 The legislature also finds that providing a structured
13 pathway, including training and paid internship opportunities,
14 will help develop qualified bilingual workers who strengthen
15 workforce development, expand language access services, and
16 create meaningful career opportunities for the State's
17 residents.



1 The legislature declares that establishing a biliteracy
2 program within the university of Hawaii is a matter of statewide
3 concern pursuant to article X, section 6, of the Hawaii State
4 Constitution.

5 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a
6 program within the university of Hawaii that enables eligible
7 high school graduates who have earned the seal of biliteracy and
8 community members with demonstrated biliteracy competency to be
9 recognized as qualified translators and interpreters.

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

13 "§304A- Language access education and workforce
14 development program; established. (a) There is established
15 within the university of Hawaii the language access education
16 and workforce development program.

17 (b) The language access education and workforce
18 development program shall be administered by the university of
19 Hawaii SEED office in collaboration with academic departments on
20 all campuses, the department of education, the department of



1 labor and industrial relations, and other relevant public and
2 private entities.

3 (c) The language access education and workforce
4 development program shall provide a curriculum for training
5 eligible participants to be recognized as qualified translators
6 and interpreters. The curriculum shall include:

7 (1) Training in translation and interpretation, including
8 ethics, standards, and best practices;

9 (2) Specialized instruction and opportunities for
10 interpretation in public service settings, including
11 settings related to education, health care, social
12 services, legal services, agriculture, and government
13 services; and

14 (3) A certificate of completion of program requirements
15 for qualified translation and interpretation
16 proficiency;

17 provided that participants shall complete educational
18 requirements, including internship opportunities through the
19 hele imua program of the department of labor and industrial
20 relations; provided further that the program shall include
21 credit-based and non-credit based opportunities.



1 (d) Priority for admission to the language access
2 education and workforce development program shall be given to
3 applicants who have earned the seal of biliteracy issued by the
4 department of education. All other applicants to the language
5 access education and workforce development program shall
6 demonstrate, as a requirement of admission, proficiency in
7 English and at least one additional language, as determined by
8 program standards or by obtaining the Global Seal of Biliteracy
9 credential."

10 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
11 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$375,000 or so much
12 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to carry
13 out the purposes of this Act, to be allocated as follows:

14 (1) \$225,000 for the establishment of three full-time
15 equivalent (3.0 FTE) positions; provided that Leeward
16 community college, Kapiolani community college, and
17 the university of Hawaii at Manoa shall each host one
18 position; and

19 (2) \$150,000 to implement the language access education
20 and workforce development program; provided that the
21 funds shall be divided equally between Leeward



1 community college, Kapiolani community college, and
2 the university of Hawaii at Manoa.

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 1, 2026.



S.B. NO. 3238
S.D. 1
H.D. 1
C.D. 1

Report Title:

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

Description:

Establishes a Language Access Education and Workforce
Development Program at the University of Hawaii. Establishes
positions. Appropriates funds. (CD1)

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