

MAR 16 2026

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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO ALLOW AN OLELO HAWAII  
PATHWAY UNDER THE NIIHAU DIALECT.

1           WHEREAS, Olelo Hawaii is a unique marker of Hawaiian  
2 identity and the proud heritage of the Hawaiian people; and

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4           WHEREAS, native speakers of the Niihau dialect come from a  
5 genealogy of continued use of Hawaiian as their primary language  
6 of cognition; and

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8           WHEREAS, except for Niihau, Hawaiian pronunciation among  
9 native speakers on all islands underwent a period of conformance  
10 to the English alphabet; and

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12           WHEREAS, even when the medium of education on Niihau  
13 eventually shifted to English, families on the island continued  
14 to use Olelo Niihau as their primary language; and

15  
16           WHEREAS, the isolation of the Niihau community has allowed  
17 Olelo Niihau to flourish as its own dialect, significantly  
18 distinct from the Olelo Hawaii commonly found in immersion  
19 schools and mainstream educational settings; and

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21           WHEREAS, various state agencies have continually  
22 acknowledged and supported Olelo Niihau as a dialect distinct  
23 from Olelo Hawaii, primarily by providing live interpreters to  
24 facilitate communication between Olelo Niihau speakers and  
25 health providers, schools, and other community institutions; and

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27           WHEREAS, the level of competence which native speakers of  
28 Olelo Niihau possess even today is a testament to the formidable  
29 instinct of the Niihua community to preserve their connection to  
30 the Hawaiian language of their ancestors; and

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1 WHEREAS, there is emerging external pressure to integrate  
2 newly invented vocabulary and concepts produced by new speakers  
3 of the Hawaiian language on to the Niihau community; and  
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5 WHEREAS, pressure to instill new linguistic characteristics  
6 on Niihau youth, whose language has been learned from their  
7 kupuna, risks attrition of Olelo Niihau by interpolation; and  
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9 WHEREAS, simultaneously, Hawaiian language revitalization  
10 initiatives have largely moved away from consulting Niihau  
11 community members as language resources; and  
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13 WHEREAS, Hawaiian language initiatives from outside of the  
14 Niihau community have enjoyed the support of legislation and  
15 policy by this body, while the specific linguistic needs of the  
16 Niihua community have been ignored or dismissed; now, therefore,  
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18 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third  
19 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, the  
20 House of Representatives concurring, that the University of  
21 Hawaii is requested to allow an Olelo Hawaii Pathway  
22 concentrating specifically on Olelo Niihau; and  
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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this  
25 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President of the  
26 University of Hawaii System.  
27  
28  
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OFFERED BY:



