
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO CONSIDER OFFERING OLELO
HAWAII MICRO-CREDENTIALS FOCUSING ON 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
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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 care providers, schools, and other community
26 institutions; and
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28 WHEREAS, the level of competence that native speakers of
29 Olelo Niihau possess even today is a testament to the formidable
30 instinct of the Niihau community to preserve their connection to
31 the Hawaiian language of their ancestors; and



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WHEREAS, there is emerging external pressure to integrate newly invented vocabulary and concepts produced by new speakers of the Hawaiian language on to the Niihau community; and

WHEREAS, pressure to instill new linguistic characteristics on Niihau youth, whose language has been learned from their kupuna, risks attrition of Olelo Niihau by interpolation; and

WHEREAS, simultaneously, Hawaiian language revitalization initiatives have largely moved away from consulting Niihau community members as language resources; and

WHEREAS, Hawaiian language initiatives from outside of the Niihau community have enjoyed the support of legislation and policy by this body, while the specific linguistic needs of the Niihau community have been ignored or dismissed; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, the House of Representatives concurring, that the University of Hawaii is requested to consider offering Olelo Hawaii micro-credentials focusing on the Niihau dialect; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President of the University of Hawaii System.

