

Honolulu, Hawaii
MAR 06 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1531
H.D. 2

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred H.B. No. 1531, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to require the Governor or mayor of a county, during a state of emergency, to:

- (1) Provide an American Sign Language interpreter at each live broadcast press conference;
- (2) Ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that the American Sign Language interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands are visible during a television or internet broadcast of the press conference; and
- (3) Provide a primary pool feed for any live official announcement that includes an American Sign Language interpreter in a picture-in-picture window, without requiring broadcasters that rebroadcast the official announcement to independently generate or insert the accessibility feature.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency; Hawai'i Civil Rights



Commission; State Council on Developmental Disabilities; Disability and Communication Access Board; Hawai'i Association of Broadcasters, Inc; Roots Reborn; El Pueblo en Acción Maui; and four individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Mayor of the County of Hawai'i and Kaua'i Emergency Management Agency.

Your Committee finds that individuals who rely on American Sign Language often face barriers accessing real time emergency information due to inconsistent visibility, inadequate interpreter placement, or the absence of an interpreter altogether. These barriers can delay the ability of deaf and hard of hearing individuals to receive time sensitive instructions and may jeopardize public safety during rapidly evolving emergencies. This measure improves equitable access to emergency information and strengthens statewide communication readiness.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring that the picture-in-picture window be at least one-quarter of the size of the primary video and large enough to clearly see the interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands, and that the interpreter not be blocked or covered by captions, graphics, or other on-screen text, which must be repositioned if necessary; and
- (2) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee respectfully requests that, should this measure move forward, an effective date of July 1, 2027, be considered to provide sufficient time for implementation.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1531, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1531, H.D. 2.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary &
Hawaiian Affairs,



DAVID A. TARNAS, Chair



