Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 17** , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 2489
    H.D. 1

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

Madame:

Your Committee on Higher Education, to which was referred
H.B. No. 2489 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to
establish a bachelor's degree program in American Sign Language
interpretation at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, as well as to
develop a multi-year plan to include a master's degree program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure
from the Disability and Communication Access Board; Hawai'i Civil
Rights Commission; Hawai'i School for the Deaf and Blind; and
numerous individuals. Your Committee received comments on this
measure from the University of Hawai'i System.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii faces a growing shortage of
qualified American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, and is one of
only eight states that does not have an ASL interpreter training
program. This measure will not only help address the significant
shortage of ASL interpreters but it will also provide Hawaii
residents with an academic and career pathway to become skilled
ASL interpreters.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

(1)  Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and

(2)  Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Higher Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2489, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2489, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Committee on Higher Education,

_____
ANDREW TAKUYA GARRETT, Chair

2026-1238 HB2489 HD1 HSCR HMSO

State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
The Thirty-third Legislature

HSCR 301-26

## Record of Votes of the Committee on Higher Education

| Bill/Resolution No.: | Committee Referral: | Date: |
|---|---|---|
| HB2489 | HED, FIN | 02.06.2026 |

☐ The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.

**The recommendation is to:** ☐ Pass, unamended (as is) ☑ Pass, with amendments (HD) ☐ Hold
☐ Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)

| HED Members | Ayes | Ayes (WR) | Nays | Excused |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  GARRETT, Andrew Takuya (C) | ✓ | | | |
| 2.  AMATO, Terez (VC) | ✓ | | | |
| 3.  EVSLIN, Luke A. | ✓ | | | |
| 4.  KAPELA, Jeanne | ✓ | | | |
| 5.  KILA, Darius K. | | | | ✓ |
| 6.  LA CHICA, Trish | | | | ✓ |
| 7.  OLDS, Ikaika | ✓ | | | |
| 8.  WOODSON, Justin H. | | | | ✓ |
| 9.  MURAOKA, Christopher L. | ✓ | | | |
| 10. SOUZA, Kanani | | | | ✓ |
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| **TOTAL (10)** | 6 | | | 4 |

**The recommendation is:** ☑ Adopted ☐ Not Adopted

If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation.
committee acronym(s)

Vice Chair's or designee's signature: _____

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