

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 31, 2026

RE: H.C.R. No. 122

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.C.R. No. 122 entitled:

"HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF
HAWAII TO ALLOW AN OLELO HAWAII PATHWAY UNDER THE NIIHAU
DIALECT,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to request the University of
Hawaii to allow an Olelo Hawaii Pathway under the Niihau dialect.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure
from one individual. Your Committee received comments on this
measure from the University of Hawai'i System.

Your Committee finds that native speakers of the Niihau
dialect come from a genealogy of continuous use of Hawaiian as
their primary language of cognition and the isolation of the
Niihau community has allowed Olelo Niihau to flourish as its own
dialect that is significantly distinct from the Olelo Hawaii
commonly found in immersion schools and mainstream educational
settings. The level of competence which native speakers of Olelo
Niihau possess is a testament to the formidable instinct of the
Niihau community to preserve their connection to the Hawaiian
language of their ancestors.



Your Committee also finds, however, that emerging external pressure to integrate new linguistic characteristics produced by new speakers of the Hawaiian language on to the Niihau community, especially Niihau youth, risks attrition of Olelo Niihau by interpolation. Furthermore, while Hawaiian language initiatives from outside of the Niihau community have enjoyed the support of legislation and policy, the specific linguistic needs of the Niihau community have been ignored or dismissed. This measure seeks to preserve and maintain Olelo Niihau as the unique marker of identity and the proud heritage of the Niihau community.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Higher Education that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of H.C.R. No. 122 and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.

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



ANDREW TAKUYA GARRETT, Chair



