

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2642

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2109  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, to which was referred S.B. No. 2109 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMUNICATIONS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to develop and implement a statewide public education and communications program to promote household emergency preparedness consistent with the Agency's fourteen-day essential supplies recommendation;
- (2) Require annual reports to the Legislature; and
- (3) Appropriate funds.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency and Hawaiian Humane Society.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Libertarian Party of Hawaii.



Your Committee finds that the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency deploys public messaging on the importance of being ready for a natural disaster or emergency by maintaining supplies necessary to survive for fourteen days. However, further education of the public on the importance of being fourteen-days ready can significantly increase uptake among the State's residents. This measure will continue to foster a culture of preparedness among the State's communities, leading more households to take responsibility for their safety and the safety of those around them.

Your Committee notes, however, that the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency has one language coordinator and needs additional bilingual resources to communicate with residents with limited English proficiency, especially during emergencies. Additionally, bilingual resources are essential for the State to comply with federal and state mandates, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Presidential Executive Order 13166 of August 11, 2000, which requires the State to provide language access as a condition to receive grants, contracts, and other partnerships. Your Committee further finds that in 2006, the State established the Office of Language Access to affirm its commitment to civil rights and comprehensive access to services regardless of national origin.

Your Committee further notes that S.B. No. 2121, Regular Session of 2026, which requires the Governor or mayor of a county to provide an American Sign Language interpreter during each official announcement broadcast via television or the Internet during a state of emergency and S.B. No. 3239, Regular Session of 2026, which appropriates funds for the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to increase access to bilingual resources and services for residents with limited English proficiency, are two measures previously heard by your Committee. Your Committee finds that the language of these vehicles is better suited if incorporated into this measure. Therefore, further amendments to this measure are necessary to incorporate the provisions of these measures.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting language:



- (A) Requiring the Governor or mayor of a county to provide an American Sign Language interpreter during each official announcement broadcast via television or the Internet during a state of emergency;
  - (B) Requiring the Governor or mayor of a county to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that the American Sign Language interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands are visible during the broadcast; and
  - (C) Requiring the Governor or mayor of a county to provide a standardized pool feed that includes the American Sign Language interpreter in a picture-in-picture window not less than one quarter the size of the primary video and not blocked or covered by captions, graphics, or other on-screen text;
- (2) Inserting an appropriation for an unspecified amount for the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to expand access to bilingual resources and services;
  - (3) Inserting legislative findings; and
  - (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

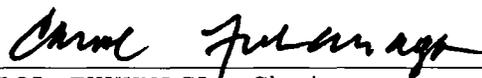
Your Committee notes that this measure contains two unspecified appropriation amounts. Should your Committee on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committee respectfully requests that it considers inserting an appropriation amount of \$1,500,000 for the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to implement this measure, including planning, community engagement, production of media assets, translation and accessibility services, evaluation, and outreach distribution costs, and to expand access to bilingual resources and services.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2109, as amended herein, and recommends that



it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B.  
No. 2109, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and  
Means.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Public Safety and  
Military Affairs,



---

CAROL FUKUNAGA, Chair



