

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 23 , 2026

RE: S.B. No. 3238
S.D. 1
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
S.B. No. 3238, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish a program within the University of Hawaii that enables eligible high school graduates who have earned the seal of biliteracy and community members with demonstrated biliteracy competency to be recognized as qualified translators and interpreters.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the University of Hawai'i System; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women; AlohaCare; Maui Roots Reborn; Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center; The Legal Clinic; Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights; and numerous individuals.

Your Committee finds that language access is essential to ensuring equitable access to education, health care, legal services, emergency services, agricultural programs, and government programs for Hawaii's diverse communities, which require trained and culturally competent translators and interpreters.



Your Committee further finds that by establishing a biliteracy program, this measure provides a structured pathway for individuals who have demonstrated biliteracy competency to further develop their skills through training and paid internship opportunities. Your Committee believes that supporting individuals with biliteracy competency through this measure will strengthen workforce development, expand language access services, and create meaningful career opportunities for the State's residents.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the number of full-time equivalent positions to an unspecified amount;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) 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 S.B. No. 3238, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 3238, S.D. 1, 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



HSCR 1718-26

Record of Votes of the Committee on Higher Education

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bill/Resolution No.: SB3238 SD1 | Committee Referral: HEDIFIN | Date: 3-16-26 |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|

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) | 9 | | | 1 |

The recommendation is: Adopted Not Adopted
 If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation.
committee acronym(s)

Vice Chair's or designee's signature: *Jay Lunt*

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