

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 2026

RE: S.B. No. 3238
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 Education, to which was referred S.B.
No. 3238 entitled:

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

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish a Language Access Education and Workforce
Development Program at the University of Hawaii; and
- (2) Appropriate funds.

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

Your Committee finds that the State is experiencing a
critical shortage of qualified local translators and interpreters
to accommodate its multilingual population. Access to government
services, health care, education, legal processes, and emergency
response depend on effective and accurate communication. Your
Committee further finds that language access is foundational to



equity, civil rights compliance, and public trust. This measure strengthens language access statewide by establishing a structured, workforce-focused pathway to train and recognize qualified translators in the State.

Your Committee acknowledges the concerns raised in testimony by the University of Hawaii System that this measure should specify whether the newly established program will be credit-based, non-credit based, or both, to clarify its implementation and accessibility. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary to address this matter.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring the Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program to include credit-based and non-credit based opportunities; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 3238, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 3238, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

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



DONNA MERCADO KIM, Chair



The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Education
EDU

Bill / Resolution No.:* SB 3238	Committee Referral: EDU, WAM	Date: 02/18/26		
☐ The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: ☐ Pass, unamended 2312 ☒ Pass, with amendments 2311 ☐ Hold 2310 ☐ Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
KIM, Donna Mercado (C)	✓			
KIDANI, Michelle N. (VC)				/
FUKUNAGA, Carol				/
HASHIMOTO, Troy N.	/			
DECORTE, Samantha	/			
TOTAL	3	2	2	2
Recommendation: ☒ Adopted ☐ Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: S. A. H.				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink File with Committee Report Committee Drafting Agency				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes