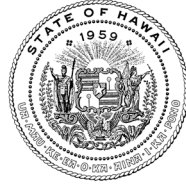


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

April 7, 2026

To: The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair,
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2026
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 308, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: S.B. 3238 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS

The DLIR **supports** this measure provided it does not conflict with the priorities identified in the Governor's Executive Supplemental Budget request. DLIR will defer to the University of Hawaii (UH) as the lead agency on internal implementation matters and bill language should the measure continue through the legislative process.

This measure creates a structured pathway to address the need for language interpreters by offering training and paid internship opportunities. These initiatives will help develop bilingual workers to meet the State's language access and workforce needs.

DLIR's Hele Imua program provides residents, including students, with internship opportunities in both public and private sectors. DLIR is prepared to collaborate with UH to offer eligible students work-based learning and workplace exposure through the proposed language access education and workforce development program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
April 7, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Debora Halbert
Vice President for Academic Strategy
University of Hawai'i System

SB 3238 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports SB 3238 SD1 HD1 – Relating to Language Access. The University of Hawai'i (UH) applauds the efforts of the legislature to build on the success of the Department of Education's Seal of Biliteracy program while striving to address language accessibility issues by creating a mechanism to develop a cadre of qualified translators and interpreters for spoken and written translation efforts. This program would help recognize and deploy the oftentimes untapped talents of many UH students and community members.

Please note that many professional settings (e.g., the court system) have official licensure processes and requirements that exist independently from higher education. As such, while a UH program could award students with a certificate of completion as specified in this measure, in practice, gainful employment as an interpreter will often depend on the attainment of additional credentialing. Additionally, while the focus on ethics, standards, and best practices in interpreter training—as specified in the measure—is commendable, many job placements will also require interpreters to possess highly specialized language proficiency (e.g., health care).

If the intent of this measure is to provide broad community access to interpreter training, we would like to offer the following context and suggestions for your consideration:

- 1) UH Mānoa has the most competitive admissions requirements and the highest tuition and fees in the UH System. While SB 3238 SD1 HD1 states that the program in question shall be administered by the SEED Office at UH Mānoa, this is not an academic unit and an academic program should not be placed there. We would also like to point out that Kapi'olani Community College (Kapi'olani CC) possesses capacity in the area of interpreter training. Kapi'olani CC has developed a series of non-credit interpreter training courses, including versions focusing on the court system and medical settings. Kapi'olani CC has offered its Medical Interpreting course to two Department of Education high schools (Pearl City and Konawaena) with online components. Additionally, Kapi'olani CC is in

the process of (a) developing multi-course, non-credit stackable pathways in this area and (b) moving these offerings into fully online formats.

- 2) It is currently unclear whether the bill calls for a credit-based program or a non-credit based credential, or both. Non-credit classes, including those offered through UH Mānoa's Outreach College, are typically far less expensive than credit-based coursework, and those wishing to enroll in such classes are not subject to college admissions requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of measure SB 3238 SD1 HD1. This legislative effort to expand the pool of trained translators and interpreters in the workforce to serve our multilingual communities is commendable, as is the opportunity to leverage UH's many excellent language programs.



April 6, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **SB3238 SD1 HD1**, Relating to Language Access

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Llasmin Chaine, LSW, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **SB3238 SD1 HD1**, Relating to Language Access

Hearing: Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women is dedicated to advancing gender equity and ensuring that all women have equitable access to public resources and opportunities. The Commission **supports SB3238 SD1 HD1** because **language access is a critical barrier to full participation** in education, employment, and civic life for many women and their families across our state. The Commission is committed to dismantling systemic barriers that disproportionately affect women and girls across the diaspora and support legislative measures that **enable economic self-sufficiency**.

By investing in language access education and workforce development, the proposed program will help build a pipeline of qualified professionals equipped to serve Hawaii's linguistically diverse population. Women are often primary caregivers and community navigators, and improved access to interpretation and translation services can reduce disparities in healthcare, legal, and social services. The bill's focus on workforce development also aligns with the Commission's commitment to economic empowerment, as it may open **new career pathways** for women interested in language access professions.

We respectfully urge this Committee to **pass SB3238 SD1 HD1**, investing in workforce development and the expansion of language access services.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, MD
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, MD
ADMINISTRATOR

1177 Alakea Street, #402, Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone: 587-0788 Fax: 587-0783 www.shpda.org

April 6, 2026

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Honorable Members

FROM: John C. (Jack) Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA, and Sr. Advisor to
Governor Josh Green, MD on Healthcare Innovation

RE: **SB 3238-SD1-HD1 -- RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS**

HEARING: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 @ 2:00 pm; Conference Room 308

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports SB 3238-SD1-HD1. It does not conflict with the priorities of the Governor's budget. However, it creates a structured pathway to address the need for more qualified language interpreters by offering training and paid internship opportunities. These initiatives will help develop bilingual workers to meet the State's language access and workforce needs. As the Maui Wildfires experience made clear, we lack sufficient bilingual access interpreters.

But the need is great also for regular and ongoing healthcare communication needs across Hawaii's health sector. Given our diverse population and our large immigrant population and considering the complexity of assuring accurate and complete communication in healthcare, this program is long overdue. The needs are also great in education, the judiciary, across all government agencies, and in the private sector as well.

We defer to the University of Hawaii on the budget and operational details, but there is no question that we need to be training more interpreters for both public and private sector purposes, and from our vantage point in particular for healthcare and emergency care purposes. This program will also provide residents, including students, with internship opportunities in both public and private sectors.

Please support this needed and cost-effective language access and workforce development program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA



ALOHA CARE

To: The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

From: Paula Arcena, Senior Vice President of External Affairs
Mike Nguyen, Senior Director of External Affairs
Maria Rallojaj, Public Policy Specialist

Hearing: Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 2:00pm, Conference Room 308

RE: **SB3283 SD1 HD1 Relating to Language Access**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB3238 SD1 HD1**. This measure establishes a statewide language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawai'i.

AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan founded by Hawai'i's Community Health Centers and the Queen Emma Clinics. We serve over 66,000 Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dual-eligible residents on all islands. Since 1994, AlohaCare has partnered with providers, government entities, and community-based organizations to meet the evolving needs of our safety net community as Hawai'i's only health plan focused solely on Medicaid-eligible individuals. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for equitable access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole-person care and health equity includes addressing various social determinants of health. With half our members mainly speaking languages other than English, we understand that language can be a barrier to receiving care. We appreciate the intent of this measure to address this barrier by growing a trained, culturally competent workforce.

With the upcoming implementation of community engagement requirements for various federal programs, such as Medicaid, this measure is also a smart workforce development investment that simultaneously strengthens language access across public systems and expands meaningful career pathways for bilingual residents.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of SB3238 SD1 HD1**.



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Via Videoconference and Conference Room 308

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3238, SD1, HD1 - RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, Rep. Miyake and Rep. Yamashita of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Veronica Mendoza, Founding Executive Director of Roots Reborn and a founding coalition member of El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui - The People in Action Maui. Roots Reborn strongly supports **SB 3238, SD1, HD1**, Relating to Language Access, which establishes a language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawaii and appropriates monies.

Roots Reborn is a grassroots, multicultural immigrant-justice and disaster-response organization serving migrant and immigrant communities on Maui and beyond. Born out of the August 2023 wildfires, we immediately stepped in to move aid, navigate systems alongside families, and build the trusted relationships that still anchor our work today. What began as wildfire response has grown into essential infrastructure for immigrant communities facing overlapping crises—from recovery and housing instability to shifting federal policies, increased enforcement, and rising fear.

In our work we have identified risks to our community presented by unnecessary barriers, such as the current significant unmet need for qualified bilingual assistance. In our work helping Maui wildfire survivors navigate disaster recovery, health care, and legal representation, we have identified lack of qualified bilingual assistance as a significant barrier. At the time of the wildfires, about one-third of Lahaina residents were foreign born, and 36% aged five and older spoke a language other than English at home. Roots Reborn has helped close some of the gap with disaster management and legal program language assistance. However, the need for bilingual assistance, especially for mental health and physical health treatment, is preventing survivors from receiving the care that they need to recover from the disaster. This is why SB 3238, SD1, HD1 is so greatly needed.

Senate Bill 3238, SD1, HD1, creates a pathway to increase Hawai'i's language access workforce by drawing upon our existing communities. It supports multilingual students by creating training opportunities, career experience, and professional pathways to become trained, qualified interpreters/translators and bilingual professionals. Being bilingual is not the same as being trained to interpret or translate. Professional language access requires specialized skills, confidentiality standards, and ethics. Establishing a statewide program helps ensure language access is competent, ethical, and consistent. We **urge you to support SB 3238, SD1, HD1**, and to vote to pass it out of this committee.

Sinceramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Veronica Mendoza', written over a thin horizontal line.

Veronica Mendoza

Maui Roots Reborn, *Founding Executive Director*

El Pueblo en Accion Maui, *Founding Coalition Member*

April 3, 2026

To:

House Committee on Finance:

Representative Chris Todd, Chair, reptodd@capitol.hawaii.gov

Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, reptakenouchi@capitol.hawaii.gov

**Re: Comments on Hawaii SB3238–
Relating to Language Access**

To the Honorable Members of the Committee:

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) wishes to express its appreciation for the opportunity to comment on this pending legislation. NAJIT commends the Hawai'i Legislature for recognizing the importance of language access and for acknowledging translation and interpretation as essential professions in SB3238. Establishing a pathway for bilingual individuals to enter the field is a positive step toward expanding Hawai'i's language access workforce.

Founded in 1978, NAJIT represents more than 1,000 court interpreters, translators, judicial officers, scholars, and trainers dedicated to advancing professional standards and ensuring equal access to justice for individuals who are limited English proficient. NAJIT urges lawmakers and the University of Hawai'i to ensure that any program intended to prepare qualified translators and interpreters reflects the realities of these professions and the standards necessary to protect the public.

While SB3238 outlines a promising framework, several critical components require clarification and strengthening:

1. Generic, English-only training cannot produce competent interpreters or translators

Training in ethics, standards, and best practices is important; however, when delivered generically and without language-specific components, it does not develop the skills required for professional interpreting or translation. These are specialized, performance-based disciplines that require intensive, language-specific practice and feedback.

2. Interpreting and translation are distinct professions

While interpreting (spoken language) and translation (written language) share foundational competencies, they require different cognitive processes, training methods, and assessment tools. Programs must clearly distinguish between the two and provide separate, discipline-appropriate training tracks. Internship opportunities should be available for both disciplines.

3. High-level bilingualism is essential and not universal

Not all bilingual individuals can interpret or translate. Some individuals may have a natural aptitude, others may develop the skills through rigorous, language-specific

training, and some may not acquire these competencies despite extensive effort. Professional interpreting requires advanced language proficiency aligned with ILR Level 3 performance standards, along with specialized skills. Professional translation similarly requires advanced proficiency in both languages and discipline-specific competencies. These cannot be achieved through general bilingualism alone.

4. **Language-specific skills training must be delivered by qualified professionals**

Students must receive instruction from qualified interpreter and translator trainers with appropriate credentials and professional experience. Without this expertise, programs cannot ensure that trainees acquire the competencies required for high-stakes environments.

5. **Specialized, domain-specific instruction is indispensable**

Interpreters and translators must develop expertise in specific fields such as law, healthcare, education, social services, and government. These domains require accuracy, confidentiality, and adherence to due process. A generalist curriculum is insufficient preparation.

6. **Internships must be supervised by qualified professionals**

Internships must be structured, standards-based, and supervised by certified or otherwise qualified professionals. Allowing unsupervised practice creates legal and ethical risks. Until an intern has obtained appropriate certification, a qualified professional should be present to monitor performance, intervene when necessary, and ensure that services provided to the public meet professional standards.

7. **Assessment must align with recognized professional benchmarks**

Completion of coursework alone does not establish competency. Programs must include assessment mechanisms aligned with nationally recognized proficiency and performance standards to ensure graduates are prepared for professional practice.

8. **Educational certificates are not licenses to practice**

Educational institutions provide training but do not confer professional certification. A certificate of completion must not be interpreted as equivalent to certification by recognized credentialing bodies such as the American Translators Association, the Hawai'i Judiciary, or the federal courts. Maintaining this distinction is essential to avoid confusion and protect the public.

NAJIT strongly supports Hawai'i's goal of expanding language access and building a robust bilingual workforce. We stand ready to collaborate with the University of Hawai'i, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and other stakeholders to strengthen the program envisioned in this legislation.

Our organization brings decades of expertise in professional standards, ethics, training, and assessment. We welcome the opportunity to support the development of a program that ensures high-quality, accurate, and ethically grounded language access services for Hawai'i's communities.

We appreciate the Legislature's leadership on this important issue and thank you for the opportunity to provide input. We are available to provide additional information or to collaborate further as this legislation moves forward.

Respectfully submitted,
The NAJIT Board of Directors

For additional information or clarification, please contact NAJIT at office@najit.org

cc:

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, senelefante@capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Carol Fukunaga, senfukunaga@capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Rachele Fernandez Lamosoa, senlamosao@capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Chris Lee, senlee@capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Joy A. Buenaventura, sensanbuenaventura@capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Glenn Wakai, senwakai@capitol.hawaii.gov

Representative Greggor Ilagan, repilagan@capitol.hawaii.gov

Debra Halbert, Vice President for Academic Strategy, University of Hawaii System,
halbert@hawaii.edu

May Mizuno, Executive Director, Office of Language Access, doh.ola@doh.hawaii.gov

Debi S. Tulang-DeSilva, Administrator, Office on Equality and Access to the Courts, Office of the Administrative Director of the Courts, oeac@courts.hawaii.gov

Brooke Bogue, Manager, Language Access Services Section, National Center for State Courts,
bbogue@ncsc.org

NAJIT Advocacy Committee, advocacy@najit.org

Endorsed by:

American Association of Interpreters and Translators in Education (AAITE)

Association of Language Companies (ALC)

American Translators Association (ATA)

Certification Commission for Health Care Interpreters (CCHI)

Canadian Language Industry Association (CLIA) / Association canadienne de l'industrie de la langue (ACIL)

National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC)



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

Testimony of Liza Ryan-Gill

In STRONG SUPPORT of SB3238 SD1 HD1

Hearing Date: April 7, 2026 at 2pm in Rm 308

Dear Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Finance,

My name is Liza Ryan-Gill, and I submit this testimony in **strong support of SB3238 SD1 HD1**, which establishes a Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawai‘i and appropriates funds to build a statewide pipeline for training interpreters, translators, and language access coordinators, on behalf of the Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR).

HCIR is a coalition of more than 30 immigrant-serving and immigrant-led organizations across the pae ‘āina working to advance policies that protect immigrant and migrant communities and strengthen Hawai‘i as a place where all families can thrive. Our member organizations work closely with limited English proficient individuals and families who rely on accurate interpretation and translation to access essential services, understand their rights, and participate fully in civic life.

The Gap This Bill Fills

Hawai‘i's Language Access Law requires state agencies to serve limited English proficient (LEP) residents — but the workforce to deliver that access is chronically underdeveloped. There is currently no statewide institutional program to train interpreters, translators, and language access coordinators at scale. Bilingual ability alone is not the same as professional interpretation or translation. In high-stakes settings — health care, schools, courts, emergency services, and government programs — inadequate interpretation leads to misunderstanding, exclusion, and harm. Hawai‘i needs a stronger, more intentional pipeline to prepare qualified professionals with training in ethics, standards, confidentiality, accuracy, and culturally responsive communication.

SB3238 SD1 HD1 fills that gap by establishing a Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawai‘i, administered through the UH SEED office in collaboration with academic departments, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and other partners. The University's multi-campus system is uniquely positioned to build this capacity across every major island.

What the Program Would Do



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

The program would provide training in translation and interpretation, specialized instruction for public service settings, and a certificate of completion recognizing qualified translation and interpretation proficiency. It prioritizes admission for applicants who have earned the Seal of Biliteracy, creating a meaningful career pathway for multilingual students and community members to serve their own communities. The bill includes funding for three full-time equivalent positions to administer and sustain the program — a recognition that language access is not only a civil rights issue, but a workforce and systems issue requiring sustained investment.

Why This Matters for LEP Communities

For LEP communities in Hawai‘i — disproportionately immigrant, Filipino, and Pacific Islander — language access is the gateway to courts, hospitals, emergency services, and legal protections. When qualified language access professionals are unavailable, the consequences include wrongful legal outcomes, delayed emergency response, and loss of rights. A stronger interpreter and translator workforce means families can better understand school communications, patients can make informed medical decisions, survivors of violence can safely access help, workers can navigate public systems, and community members can engage more fully with public institutions. This bill builds local workforce capacity rather than relying on the inconsistent, ad hoc language access solutions that too many of our communities have been forced to depend on.

The Finance Committee's Role

This is a sound appropriation that makes Hawai‘i's existing legal obligations real. Having passed the Senate and House HED, this bill comes before Finance for the final step before the floor. HCIR urges this Committee to support the full appropriation and advance this bill.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee PASS SB3238 SD1 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Liza Ryan-Gill

Co-Director and Refounder

SB-3238-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2026 2:02:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
amy agbayani	The Legal Clinic	Support	In Person

Comments:

My name is Amy Agbayani, President of The Legal Clinic Hawai'i, a non-profit community organization providing legal representation and assistance to low-income immigrants and families and emeritus director of UH Manoa student diversity services. My testimony in support of this bill is informed by being a Filipino immigrant myself and working with immigrant communities, DOE, UH, government agencies and community groups.

I strongly endorse SB3238 for it will help meet language access mandates, meet academic educational objectives, develop workforce and career opportunities needed in our community.

Our community must acknowledge the contributions, rights, responsibilities of all people in our community, including our limited English proficient residents. Our state population is diverse, with 18% foreign-born population who come from many countries including Canada and Mexico. The majority of immigrants are from Asia and the Pacific; and 50% of immigrants are from the Philippines. Hawai'i immigrants contribute billions to the state GDP--paying taxes, creating businesses, staffing essential jobs--while often being paid very low wages and lacking access to social benefits. A majority of immigrants are US citizens and many have US citizen spouses and children.

Hawai'i has one of the highest per-capita rates of limited English proficient persons ("LEP persons") in the nation. Of the State's population, 348,139 persons (1 in 4) speak a language other than English at home and 161,055 residents (1 in 9 speak) English "less than very well," and counted as limited English proficient speakers (LEP). Languages spoken by Hawai'i foreign born communities include Ilokano, Tagalog, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Samoan, Tonga, Micronesian, Pohnpeian, Marshallese and Chuukese, Communicating in the languages they understand is critical to their ability to access services and resources. Foreign born residents and Hawai'i residents from the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands experience severe barriers to active participation in the community. LEP are a disadvantaged and vulnerable sector of the community with limited access to information and resources. Many have no information on government services, have limited English proficiency, experience prejudice, cultural misunderstanding and unable to receive government and community resources. We have talented students and faculty to support Hawai'i and the immigrant community that is under attack. This bill will help the state develop workers to assist LEP in our state receive services to meet equal access mandates. Government, private companies and non-profit organizations need persons who are qualified to provide language access. For example, my own organization, The Legal Clinic depends on services of lawyers and other staff who can communicate with clients

detained at the Federal Detention Center. Translators and interpreters were needed after the fires in Lahaina, a community with 30% foreign-born, 40% Filipino and a significant percentage LEP.

UH and DOE have students who can speak or are learning to speak languages in addition to English who may be interested and eligible for this program. UH has faculty and student services to implement a Language Access Education and Workforce development program but needs additional resources to provide training for students from any of the campuses. The UHM SEED program has experience working with grants, academic and student services units at Manoa and other campuses as well as experience working with internships from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. This program provides a pathway to jobs and careers to serve our state.

I commend the DOE for providing not only instruction to teach English as a second language to foreign born children, but to programs to certify competence in English and 'Olelo Hawai'i and English and a foreign or community language (e.g. Spanish, Ilokano, Japanese). In addition, UH offers numerous classes, including four-year and graduate level courses in various languages. Undergraduate and graduate students at UH campuses will be eligible to increase their language skills and obtain training, internships and other educational opportunities in translation and interpretation. The program will be able to offer credit and non-credit courses. Students participants in the language education and workforce development program can be from any campus, any academic major and become qualified to work with limited English proficient persons. Many occupations and professionals can benefit from having these bilingual skills and training (Health care professionals, Lawyers, Social Workers, Emergency responders Police, tourism staff), a major. Both government and private organizations need trained bilingual workers to serve the large number of LEP.

I respectfully urge the Committee approve this bill because it help the state meet community needs, mandates for language access and supports DOE UH educational and workforce development objectives.

Mahalo. Amy Agbyani



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
HB1886, HD2, SD1 – RELATING TO GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
HB2540, HD2, SD1 – RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Senate Judiciary Committee

Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair
Sen. Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: April 7, 2026 | Letter Date: April 6, 2026

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Clinic (TLC) strongly supports HB1886, HD2, SD1 and HB2540, HD2, SD1 two measures that draw clear, enforceable boundaries on state and county involvement in federal civil immigration enforcement and reinforce safety and constitutional protections for all Hawai'i residents. These goals are among the highest priorities of the Campaign for Immigrant Justice (CIJ) this legislative session. TLC is a nonprofit organization that advances immigrant justice statewide through legal services, education, and advocacy; we also serve on the CIJ steering committee alongside the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights and the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i.

HB1886, HD2, SD1 establishes firm limits on state and county cooperation with federal immigration enforcement except where required by law. The bill prohibits the use of public resources to support immigration enforcement operations, restricts deputization and participation in joint task forces that risk constitutional violations, and strengthens oversight of any criminal law enforcement cooperation by requiring written, time-limited agreements subject to Attorney General review. The bill also creates enforceable transparency standards requiring visible identification and restricting the use of facial coverings by law enforcement officers, with narrowly tailored safety exceptions and misdemeanor penalties for violations. Importantly, this measure reinforces protections for constitutionally protected activities and establishes criminal penalties for unauthorized civil immigration interrogation, arrest, or detention, while establishing a safe harbor provision for good faith compliance.

HB2540, HD2, SD1 complements this framework by requiring law enforcement agencies to adopt and publicly post written policies on civil immigration enforcement, immigration status inquiries, and the use of facial coverings, visible identification, and vehicle markings; restricting state or county participation in immigration enforcement activity at sensitive community locations; limiting the collection and sharing of immigration-related personal data; and requiring public reporting of civil immigration requests. This measure also requires state and county law enforcement personnel to turn on their body cameras to monitor immigration enforcement activity. Like HB1886, HD2, SD1 this bill establishes criminal offenses for violations, prohibits officers from initiating or prolonging stops solely to investigate civil immigration status and clarifies that reasonable suspicion may not be based on race, ethnicity,

language, or other protected characteristics. The Department of Law Enforcement is directed to assist state and county agencies in maintaining compliance.

Both bills offer provisions that restrict state and county participation in civil immigration operations that exceed statutory authority or risk violating constitutional rights. Both bills promote transparency and accountability in law enforcement. Because these bills and others pending before the Legislature this session address overlapping subjects and amend related chapters of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes, TLC respectfully recommends harmonizing these measures to strengthen implementation, reinforce safeguards on constitutional rights, and provide clear guidance to agencies and officers.

We appreciate the Legislature's leadership in carefully examining how state and county resources are used, how law enforcement accountability can be strengthened, and how trust between communities and local law enforcement institutions can be protected - particularly in this national moment of intensifying federal immigration enforcement and well-documented violations of constitutional rights. These measures reflect Hawai'i's commitment to safety, dignity, and due process for all residents, and TLC stands ready to support their effective implementation.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of The Legal Clinic
and Board President Amefil Agbayani,



Christina Sablan
Community & Policy Advocate

**Testimony of HAWAII FILIPINO LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (HFLA)
In SUPPORT of SB3238 SD1 HD1**

House Committee on Finance (FIN)

Chair: Rep. Chris Todd

Vice Chair: Rep. Jenna Takenouchi

Hearing Date: **April 7, 2026**

Dear Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Finance,

My name is Wilfredo Tungol, HFLA Advocacy Committee Chair. HFLA submit this testimony in **support of SB3238 SD1 HD1**, which establishes a Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawai‘i and appropriates funds to build a statewide pipeline for training interpreters, translators, and language access coordinators. HFLA supports providing language access to our large immigrants of Limited English Proficiency for purpose of workforce development training.

Hawai‘i’s Language Access Law requires state agencies to serve limited English proficient (LEP) individuals — but the workforce to deliver that access is chronically underdeveloped. There is currently no statewide institutional program to train interpreters, translators, and language access coordinators on a scale. SB3238 SD1 HD1 fills that gap by establishing a Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawai‘i, whose multi-campus system can build capacity across every major island.

For LEP communities in Hawai‘i — disproportionately immigrant, Filipino, and Pacific Islander — language access is the gateway to courts, hospitals, emergency services, and legal protections. When qualified language access professionals are unavailable, the consequences include wrongful legal outcomes, delayed emergency response, and loss of rights. This is a sound appropriation that makes Hawai‘i’s existing legal obligations real. Having passed the Senate and House HED, this bill comes before Finance for the final step before the floor.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee **PASS SB3238 SD1 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Wilfredo Tungol

HFLA Advocacy Chair

808-387-7412

SB-3238-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 10:24:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christian Marquez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Finance,

My name is Christian Marquez, and I submit this testimony in support of SB3238 SD1 HD1, which establishes a Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawai‘i and appropriates funds to build a statewide pipeline for training interpreters, translators, and language access coordinators.

Hawai‘i’s Language Access Law requires state agencies to serve limited English proficient (LEP) individuals — but the workforce to deliver that access is chronically underdeveloped. There is currently no statewide institutional program to train interpreters, translators, and language access coordinators at scale. SB3238 SD1 HD1 fills that gap by establishing a Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawai‘i, whose multi-campus system can build capacity across every major island.

For LEP communities in Hawai‘i — disproportionately immigrant, Filipino, and Pacific Islander — language access is the gateway to courts, hospitals, emergency services, and legal protections. When qualified language access professionals are unavailable, the consequences include wrongful legal outcomes, delayed emergency response, and loss of rights. This is a sound appropriation that makes Hawai‘i’s existing legal obligations real. Having passed the Senate and House HED, this bill comes before Finance for the final step before the floor.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee PASS SB3238 SD1 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Christian Marquez

SB-3238-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 9:12:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diann Karin Lynn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB3238 SD1 HD1 — Language Access Education & Workforce Development Program at UH

I am a supporter of the Legal Clinic in their campaign for immigrant justice and defense of due process for all.

In this case of this bill, I am writing in SUPPORT because

- This bill will would create a program at UH which would provide specific training for the workforce to provide access to limited English proficient students as required by the state’s Language Access Law. Such training does not currently exist.
- Since UH has campuses on all four main islands, the reach of this bill will be statewide.
- Immigrant (especially Filipino and Pacific Islander) communities disproportionately present limited English proficiencies. Language access is the gateway to courts, hospitals, emergency services, and legal protections, so this bill will particularly enhance access to these critical services to those communities.

I am aware that a companion bill advancing the same program is also working in the Senate (HB2005 HD2 SD1). I support passage of both bills to increase likelihood that the program reaches the Governor’s desk.

PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.

Mahalo
Diann K Lynn
Mō’ili’ili

SB-3238-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 10:53:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

in support

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Via Videoconference and Conference Room 308

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3238, SD1, HD1 - RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, Rep. Miyake for my Maui district, Rep. Yamashita of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I am also an attorney licensed in the state of Hawaii for over 25 years and a founding coalition member of El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui — The People in Action Maui. Earlier in my career I was also certified by the Japanese government in level one Japanese language interpretation. I am writing in **strong support of SB 3238, SD1, HD1**, Relating to Language Access, which establishes a statewide language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawaii and appropriates funds.

Early in my career, I was the founding Program Manager of the Maui Economic Development Board's Women in Technology Project, where I worked on equity in STEM as a workforce development issue for many years, and wrote over ten peer-reviewed papers on best practices in the field. In that capacity, I identified barriers to workforce development, those elements in the training to workforce pipeline that led to shortages of skilled workers, especially in our neighbor island community. As a volunteer with El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui — The People in Action Maui, I have also witnessed how the unmet need for bilingual assistance impacts our community as a whole, with people unable to access legal services, health care resources, and social services as the result of lack of language access.

It is important to note that trained, qualified interpreters with appropriate skills, confidentiality standards, and ethics are very needed. I remember when I was a volunteer with the Family Court Monitoring Project some years ago, observing an interaction between the court and a Japanese national visitor, who was before the court on charges of domestic violence. A staff member of the hotel where he was staying served as his "interpreter" for the day. This was not appropriate, as she was not a trained or qualified interpreter for courtroom work. I witnessed the court ask a question of the accused, and the hotel staff providing the accused the question on behalf of the court. I also witnessed the accused make extremely inappropriate statements in Japanese, berating the court and also making statements that, essentially, the victim deserved it, and that the whole thing of being in court was nonsense. I then witnessed the hotel staff give a completely different interpretation than what the man said. She was very polite, apologetic, and deferential. I hoped that the court picked up on the man's body language, tone, and facial expression and recognized that the interpretation was inaccurate.

This experience of witnessing such inaccurate and inappropriate interpretation in front of a family court judge in a case of domestic violence was shocking to me. I hope that my experience highlights for the Committee the importance of the goals of SB 3238, SD1, HD1 to provide professionally trained interpreters. I request that you support language access and **vote in support of SB 3238, SD1, HD1**.

Mahalo for all you do for your constituents and community,

Christine Andrews, JD
Wailuku, Maui

SB-3238-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2026 12:51:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Weygan-Hildebrand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Finance Committee:

Please support this bill.

I strongly support this bill’s recognition that Hawai‘i’s multilingual population is an inherent public asset. In a state where linguistic diversity reflects generations of migration, cultural continuity, and community knowledge, multilingual capacity should be seen not only as a need for accommodation but also as a strength that can be intentionally developed for public benefit.

This measure appropriately recognizes that bilingual and culturally sensitive students, including those who have earned the Seal of Biliteracy, represent an important workforce pipeline for translation and interpretation services in education, health care, social services, legal services, agriculture, and government. By creating structured pathways into these professions, the bill affirms that language competency has civic, economic, and institutional value.

To strengthen this measure, I encourage also that language educators and programs of the University of Hawaii be centrally involved. Key departments include indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures, East Asian Languages and Literatures, and languages and Literatures of Europe and the Americas.

Thank you.

SB-3238-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2026 5:08:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalae	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is a strong idea. Hawai‘i needs more pathways for students to use the language skills they already have, and a clear career track will encourage more young people to develop and maintain those abilities. By creating structured training and certification, this program helps students turn their biliteracy into real workforce opportunities while strengthening language access across the state.

Testimony In SUPPORT of SB3238 SD1 HD1

House Committee on Finance (FIN)

Chair: Rep. Chris Todd

Vice Chair: Rep. Jenna Takenouchi

Hearing Date: April 7, 2026

Dear Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Finance,

My name is Jeremiah Brown and I submit this testimony in **support of SB3238 SD1 HD1**, which establishes a Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawai'i and appropriates funds to build a statewide pipeline for training interpreters, translators, and language access coordinators.

In my role as an educator, I work closely with multilingual students and their families. I have also run student translator programs at my school. Through these experiences, I have seen firsthand both the incredible linguistic assets our students bring to their schools and communities and the real need for structured training, ethical guidance, and clear pathways into professional language access work.

In each of the past three years, over 100 students have graduated from Waipahu High School with the Seal of Biliteracy. These students demonstrate high levels of proficiency in English and at least one additional language, and many already serve informally as translators and interpreters for their families, attending doctor's appointments, helping fill out forms, and even file tax returns. While their willingness to help is admirable and often necessary, they shouldn't be placed in those roles as a qualified, trained interpreter or translator would be more appropriate.

Hawai'i's Language Access Law requires state agencies to serve limited English proficient (LEP) individuals, but the workforce to deliver that access is chronically underdeveloped. There is currently no statewide institutional program to train interpreters, translators, and language access coordinators at scale. SB3238 SD1 HD1 fills that gap by establishing a Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawai'i, whose multi-campus system can build capacity across every major island.

For LEP communities in Hawai'i, who are disproportionately immigrant, Filipino, and Pacific Islander, language access is the gateway to courts, hospitals, emergency services, and legal protections. When qualified language access professionals are unavailable, the consequences include wrongful legal outcomes, delayed emergency response, and loss of rights. This is a sound appropriation that makes Hawai'i's existing legal obligations real. Having passed the Senate and House HED, this bill comes before Finance for the final step before the floor.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee **PASS SB3238 SD1 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Brown
Waialua, Oahu

To: Chair, Rep. Chris Todd; Vice-chair Rep. Jenna Takenouchi
Members, House Committee on Finance

When: April 7, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

Location: Conference Room 308

Re: **SB 3238 SD 1 HD 1. Comments.**

Good afternoon. Thank you for hearing this bill.

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT) submitted comments in their testimony on HB 2005 SD 2 HD 1 on April 6, 2026, before WAM. I am in complete agreement with NAJIT. My own comments follow.

My background. Since 2007, I have been a Hawai'i Judiciary Certified Spanish Court Interpreter (Tier 4). My work experience from the 1980s on includes interpreting for international conferences. In 1989 I started working in federal court here, and since 1990, in state courts. My translations have been accepted in every venue to which they were given, including immigration courts. My work as a subcontractor in forensic transcription and translation has been used in major cases on the mainland. I have done this type of work as well as document translation for the federal court here, and served as an expert witness.

There are fourteen (14) certified or higher tier spoken language court interpreters in Hawai'i. At least four of them on Oahu are both more experienced and more highly credentialed than I am. One of them is a certified healthcare interpreter and trains healthcare interpreters over the internet.

My writings on court interpreter ethics have been incorporated into the official manuals for at least two USA states, as well as Finland and Queensland, Australia. For a Hawai'i state Office on Language Access (OLA) conference, I gave a talk on ethics for translators.

I have participated in five different internship programs. My roles: intern, administrator, teacher. These experiences taught me how internships can be valuable, positive, learning experiences. They can also go wrong, with interns being given nothing but scut work, or being ignored or sidelined because of prejudice against an intern based on race, gender, or age. There can be poor planning, or lack of appropriate supervision.

It requires thoughtful work, preparation, and appropriate staff to run a good internship program.

It is crucial for the Legislature to respect the autonomy of our university system. This bill originates outside our university system. It seeks to dictate to UHM a number of staff positions and their location within the UHM system. It also seeks to dictate to UHM who should be entitled to priority in entering the proposed generic interpreter training and internship program. This is deeply disrespectful to our university and the autonomy any university needs to preserve its integrity.

Is it even appropriate to have a university host a generic training program? That is something that should be decided by UHM faculty in consultation with the interpreting and translation professions.

In 2013, I co-authored a proposal to California State University, Los Angeles, for a *Certificate Program in Medical Interpreting (Spanish-English)*. The proposal was accepted, effective Spring Quarter 2014. This proposal was based on my research. All of the college and university programs for interpreter training that I knew about were language specific. However, I have not updated my research.

This bill is well intentioned, but based on multiple mistaken assumptions. Those mistaken assumptions make the internship program it proposes deeply, fatally flawed. More thinking and research, leading to major revisions, are needed to create a good internship program that may help with workforce development.

Generic training, that is, training conducted in English, on topics such as ethics, standards, and best practices, does not produce competent interpreters or translators. It functions to produce people who are more attentive to these issues, or so we hope.

The standard recommendation for generic trainings is for 40 hours, minimum. For healthcare interpreters, some advocates prefer 60 hours.

OLA has a good history of hosting generic training programs. In 2012, OLA hosted *The Community Interpreter*®, a 40-hour training by Cross-Cultural Communications. Areas: healthcare interpreting, 36 hours. Educational and social service interpreting: 4 hours. I graduated from this program. Following another 40 hours of training, I was given a license to teach it.

Last year, OLA also hosted a generic training for healthcare interpreters, taught by Christopher Moreno Dimmick. He is a certified court interpreter at the Master level (Tier 6) and a certified healthcare interpreter.

On April 4, 2026, he taught a webinar over Zoom on a very sophisticated subject: “What is a check interpreter? The role of professional interpreters in the age of AI interpretation and translation.” It was outstanding. People can view his impressive background and credentials on the OLA web site. <https://health.hawaii.gov/ola/office-of-language-access-ola-zoom-training-webinar-for-translators-and-interpreters-what-is-a-check-interpreter-the-role-of-professional-interpreters-in-the-age-of-ai-interpretation-and-tra/>

UHM does not have staff to teach the proposed generic training program.

UHM tried having a generic interpreter training program at one time. The program failed. Whether or not a more realistic forty-hour program taught by a certified interpreter would succeed, I do not know.

The University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) used to have a Center for Interpretation and Translation Studies (CITS). The last director, a bilingual with no interpreter certification, created a four semester, generic training program. Since forty (40) hours is the usual amount of time for

generic trainings, this program was more inflated than a puffer fish in full puff. It was unlikely to succeed.

One day I looked at the CITS web site and saw that the program was marked as being “in hiatus.” I didn’t bother to ask why. Instead, I looked at a UHM web site that tracks enrollment. The university usually requires a minimum of five (5) students for a class to run. The enrollment web site showed that enrollment for the last two years, as well as summer school, varied from zero to five students. Most of the classes had an enrollment of less than the required five.

CITS is no longer listed in the UHM on-line catalog.

Interpreting (spoken work) and translation (written work) are skills.

Some people are natural interpreters. Some need training, preferably language-specific. Some people cannot develop the skills, regardless of training and/or study.

It takes a high level of bilingualism to do interpretation and/or translation. Generally, for interpreters, a level of at least two years of college education is considered the minimum. Most competent interpreters are educated to the bachelor’s level at the least.

To develop interpreting skills, language-specific skills training is generally needed. The UH system does not have the staff do this kind of training. KCC does do this for ASL.

Prof. Lucia Aranda teaches an upper division course in Spanish translation. If there is another language-specific course in translation at UHM, I do not know about it.

Translators have what we call a *direction*. They should work from their second (weaker) language into their first (stronger) language. The Seal of Biliteracy graduates are probably born and educated in the USA. That normally means that their direction would be from their Language Other Than English (LOTE) into English. This bill expects to have interns working from English into their LOTE—not the correct direction, and a violation of standards, ethics, and best practices.

For the [American Translators Association](https://www.atanet.org/client-assistance/buying-language-services)’s guidance on how to get translations done, see <https://www.atanet.org/client-assistance/buying-language-services>. Also, from Kleber Palma: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/language-access-translation-and-interpretation-policies-and-practices/practitioners-corner>.

People achieve a high level of bilingualism in various ways. These may include formal study, living and studying abroad, and being raised to speak two or more languages. All are valid. Section 2 (h) of this bill gives priority in entrance to the proposed generic training program to the Seal of Biliteracy graduates. There is no good justification for this. Program faculty should decide on the personal history and test-based standard for entry to the proposed program. This is also an issue of university autonomy.

An internship program that places interns in non-profit agencies or government offices could provide valuable learning experiences to monolingual and bilingual interns alike.

The interns could learn about the work done in these settings, and could help with some of it. Bilingual interns could learn how to do some of the work in their LOTE, under supervision.

However, to expect the bilingual interns to do interpretation or translation is to create possible legal liability. It concerns me that bilingual interns might feel pressured to do interpreting and translation work for which they are not qualified. Or they might overestimate their capability and want to do it. Either way, legal liability is a potential problem.

Traumatized clients can lead to vicarious trauma among service providers, including interpreters. Hawaii has some very traumatized people, including victims of domestic violence and trafficking, survivors of the Maui fires, and now from the recent flooding events. We can also expect trauma from ICE arrests. Therefore, trauma-informed interpreter training is a necessity. See also “Resources for Interpreters Webinar #9: Trauma Basics for Interpreters – When Trauma Is in the Room.”

Service providers also need to be sophisticated about this issue.

Schools do not certify interpreters or translators, just as they do not license doctors or lawyers. They may have a program of study for which they issue a Certificate of Completion.

Agencies can do things to improve the translations of their documents. The first step is to translate their documents into what is called Plain English or Simple English. The Hawaii State Office on Language Access (OLA) has twice brought in experts to teach how to do this. Their talks were filmed. In the past, those videos, and some supporting written materials, were available on the OLA web site.

OLA also brought in Kleber Palma, a nationally known expert, to teach about how to get translations done. OLA should have videos and written materials available from his presentations. There are also plenty of internet links to his presentations.

I can see the problems this bill hopes to solve. Unfortunately, although I am sympathetic to these concerns, it looks to me as if this bill cannot fulfill what it promises. I’m sorry to say this.

There is a lot more to say about this bill. For now, I hope this is a good start, and that you find it useful. Please feel free to send me your questions.

Thank you for reading these comments and hearing this bill.

Aloha,

Marcella Alohalani Boido, M.A.

Hawai’i State Judiciary Certified Spanish Court Interpreter (Tier 4)

Licensed Trainer, The Community Interpreter®