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

February 25, 2026

To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair,  
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026  
Time: 10:56 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 211, State Capitol

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

**Re: S.B. 3238 SD1 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.

## Testimony in Support of SB3238- Relating to Language Access

February 25, 2026

Senate Ways and Means Committee

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Jeremiah Brown, and I am the multilingual learners program coordinator at Waipahu High School. I am writing in strong support of SB3238, which establishes a statewide Language Access Education and Workforce Development Program at the University of Hawai'i.

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.

SB3238 directly addresses this need, a need that was made clear during the pandemic and the aftermath of the Maui wildfires. By creating a structured, statewide program that builds on the Seal of Biliteracy and provides training and paid internship opportunities, this bill validates students' linguistic skills while also protecting the communities they serve. It transforms what is currently informal, uneven, and often uncompensated labor into a professional pathway that benefits both students and the State of Hawai'i.

This bill also sends the important message that students' home languages and cultural knowledge are strengths that are valued, needed, and worthy of investment. For many multilingual students, especially those from immigrant families, this recognition can be life-changing. It connects school success to meaningful career opportunities and directly supports Hawai'i's language access obligations across state agencies.

From my experience in schools, I can say with confidence that there is both student interest and workforce need for a program like the one proposed in SB3238. My school alone sends out dozens of multilingual graduates into the workforce every year. This bill builds on existing successes, such as the Seal of Biliteracy, and thoughtfully extends them into higher education and workforce development.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support SB3238. Mahalo for your time, your consideration, and your continued commitment to equity, access, and opportunity for Hawai'i's diverse communities.

Respectfully,

Jeremiah Brown  
Multilingual Learners program coordinator  
Waipahu High School

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB3238  
RELATING TO Language Access  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 25, 2026

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Dina Yoshimi, and I submit this testimony in support of SB 3238, a bill that establishes a statewide language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawai'i.

I have been a faculty member at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa for 33 years, and have been the Director of the Hawai'i Language Roadmap Initiative since the launch of the Hawai'i Language Roadmap in September 2013. The Roadmap played a key role in supporting the creation of the Seal of Biliteracy, and has subsequently provided educational and workforce development opportunities for Seal of Biliteracy candidates and high school bilinguals across the state, including training in career skills for participating in a multilingual workforce. Today I am testifying as an individual and do not represent the University of Hawai'i.

The linguistic heritage of our bilingual students as well as the hard-earned proficiency of our students who commit the hours required to master an additional language is an invaluable asset to the state. The DOE has provided the Seal of Biliteracy as a meaningful and valuable recognition of these students' abilities. The recognition is meaningful in that it is the only way our state communicates to bilinguals and proficient learners that their linguistic talent is worth celebrating and maintaining. The recognition is valuable in that employers who see the Seal of Biliteracy on a resume know that the student has demonstrated proficiency in English and an additional language at least at a functional level of fluency. (Without the evidence-based Seal of Biliteracy, the claim is based on the applicant's subjective judgment of their own abilities.) I know a number of students who have been hired for their language skills in the local workforce based on their status as Seal of Biliteracy recipients.

The state needs a program to nurture this growing pool of talent. There are now thousands of students who have earned the Seal of Biliteracy, and hundreds more who have earned the internationally-recognized Global Seal of Biliteracy through testing opportunities

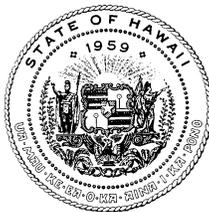
provided by the Roadmap. The program proposed by this bill provides a welcome opportunity for these individuals to continue to develop their skills to serve the multilingual needs of the state. As the language of the bill identifies, language access is not a luxury—it is a fundamental requirement for ensuring equitable access to education, healthcare, legal services, and emergency government programs. In a state as diverse as Hawaii, our multilingual population is one of our greatest strengths; however, this strength can only be realized when we bridge the communication gap with a trained, culturally competent workforce.

SB3238 provides a structural framework to address the shortage of qualified interpreters and translators. The bill's emphasis on the Department of Education's Seal of Biliteracy is a practical way to keep local talent in the islands. It transforms a student's existing linguistic skills into a marketable professional asset, providing a clear bridge from high school to a career in public service or healthcare.

The integration with the Hele Imua internship program through the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations ensures that participants receive hands-on experience in public service settings, including agriculture and social services, while potentially receiving the financial support necessary to complete their education.

Ensuring that every resident can understand their doctor, participate in their child's education, and navigate the legal system is a matter of statewide concern and constitutional duty. This bill creates a "win-win" scenario: it strengthens our workforce development and ensures that our most vulnerable non-English speaking residents are treated with the dignity and clarity they deserve.

I urge you to support this timely and consequential measure. Thank you for your time and consideration.



**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS**

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February 25, 2026  
Time: 10:56 AM  
ROOM 211 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

**SB 3238, HD1 - RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS**

**Testifier: May Mizuno, Executive Director, Office of Language Access**

**Purpose: Establishes a language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawai'i.**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, members of the committee on Ways and Means, good morning. My name is May Mizuno, executive director of the Office of Language Access.

The Office of Language Access (OLA) submits this testimony in strong support of SB3238 SD1- Relating to Language Access to establish language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawaii. This bill would help to provide career experience and opportunities for multilingual students, such as those who obtained Seal of Biliteracy from HIDOE.

For two decades, our office has monitored the implementation of HRS 321C, and the single greatest barrier to compliance remains the critical shortage of qualified, local interpreters. Professional training in ethics and standards is essential for public service. Relying on untrained "family interpreters" significantly increases the risk of medical errors, legal appeals, and privacy violations. This program ensures the "Meaningful Access" is also competent access, providing instruction in the best practices necessary for high stakes interpretation.

SB3238 SD1 addresses a critical and long-standing challenge faced by the State: the shortage of trained, culturally competent translators and interpreters able to serve Hawaii's linguistically diverse communities, and language access is foundational to equity, civil rights compliance, and public trust.

This bill will bridge the existing gap between the Department of Education's Seal of Biliteracy and the professional workforce. By providing structured, statewide training pathway, we ensure that students' linguistic skills are converted into professional credentials that the State desperately needs, creating meaningful post-secondary career opportunities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



February 24, 2026

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

**To:** Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

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

Hearing: Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 10:56 a.m.  
Conference Room 211, 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** 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. We stand in strong support of SB3238 SD1. 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.

I respectfully urge this Committee to **pass SB3238 SD1**, in support of this important investment in workforce development and the expansion of language access services.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
February 25, 2026 at 10:56 a.m.

By

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

SB 3238 SD1 – RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports SB 3238 SD1 – 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. This program would help recognize and deploy the oftentimes untapped talents of many UH students and community members.

Currently, the bill states that the proposed "language access education and workforce development program" shall serve "eligible high school graduates" as well as "members of the community." If the intent of this measure is indeed to provide broad community access 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 states that the program in question shall be administered by the SEED Office at UH Mānoa, 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) 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of measure SB 3238 SD1. 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.

**SB-3238-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:37:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carolyn Weygan-Hildebrand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is in strong support not only for workforce development but also for economic development and community development values. Hawaii should have done this a long time ago and become more resilient to changes that we are seeing now. Mahalo.



To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

Hearing: Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 10:56am, Conference Room 211

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

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AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **SB3238 SD1**. 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**.



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB3238, SD1 RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS

### Senate Committee on Education

Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Sen. Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 25, 2026 | Conference Room 211 | Letter Date: February 24, 2026

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Clinic (TLC) strongly supports SB3238, SD1 which establishes a statewide language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawai`i. TLC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing immigrant justice in Hawai`i through immigration legal services, community education, and policy advocacy. Ensuring equitable access to justice and public services for individuals with limited English proficiency is central to our mission and to the well-being of the communities we serve.

Language barriers remain a significant obstacle for many immigrants and migrants in Hawai`i. Limited access to qualified interpretation and translation services can prevent individuals from understanding their legal rights, accessing public safety protections, and meaningfully engaging with government agencies. These barriers often result in delayed or denied access to critical services, misunderstandings in legal proceedings, and reduced trust in public institutions.

SB3238, SD1 offers a sustainable solution to these challenges. Research and national best practices consistently demonstrate that increased language access improves outcomes in legal and public safety settings. Accurate and culturally competent interpretation reduces miscommunication, promotes procedural fairness, and supports due process. Strengthening language access also enhances public safety by encouraging individuals to report crimes and cooperate with investigations without fear that language barriers will prevent them from being understood or treated fairly.

SB3238, SD1's focus on workforce development is well-aligned with community needs. Collaboration with public service agencies and community organizations will help ensure that training reflects real-world service demands. At TLC, much of our legal services work depends on third-party interpreters, and we anticipate continued demand for these language services in the years ahead. We particularly encourage recruitment and training of interpreters with specialized knowledge of legal terminology and understanding of the unique and often sensitive circumstances faced by immigrants, refugees, and survivors of crime navigating the legal system.

SB3238, SD1 represents an important investment in fairness, access to justice, and the effectiveness of Hawai'i's public service systems. We appreciate the Legislature's commitment to language access and look forward to supporting the successful implementation of this important initiative.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Sablan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christina Sablan  
Community & Policy Advocate

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

My name is Debra Andres Arellano, and I am submitting testimony again to express my strong support for SB 3238. I draw upon my 15 years of experience as an educator and a former board member of Kaibigan ng Lahaina, a culturally responsive disaster response organization founded after the Lahaina wildfires. I am currently an Instructor of Ilokano Language for UH Maui College, however, I am submitting this testimony today as a private citizen.

As a former administrator, I can attest that our primary duty has always been to the families in our community. However, we have never been able to fully nurture our multilingual students in a way that allows them to support our community because we have never received the necessary support from the state through an established fund or pathway.

Throughout my career, I have seen an increase in Ilokano heritage learners gaining interest in learning their native language, but there is currently no clear avenue for gainful employment for these students once they reach proficiency. Since 2017, the HIDOE has awarded the State Seal of Biliteracy to over 3,000 students, but there is still no established pathway for these graduates to transition into the workforce as qualified interpreters and translators. These students represent a "valuable pipeline," yet their linguistic wealth remains an underutilized resource.

SB 3238 provides the solution by establishing a language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawaii. This program will create meaningful career opportunities and develop a qualified bilingual workforce to serve Hawaii's diverse communities. By providing a structured curriculum and paid internship opportunities, this bill transforms a student's linguistic skills into a marketable professional asset.

The Lahaina wildfires underscored that language access is a fundamental requirement for equitable access to healthcare and emergency services. While we have language access laws, state agencies often struggle to provide services because the demand for qualified professionals far outstrips the current supply.

In addition, professional translation requires specialized training in ethics and technical standards that goes beyond mere bilingualism. I respectfully urge you to pass SB3238 to invest in our heritage learners and fulfill our state's commitment to meaningful language access. It is an investment in our local talent and will help fulfill our state's commitment to meaningful language access.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Debra Andres Arellano



NAKEM Conferences

94-390 Hoaeae Street, Waipahu, HI 96797 / [nakemconferences@gmail.com](mailto:nakemconferences@gmail.com)

24 February 2026

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

We are officers and members of NAKEM Conferences, an advocacy organization for linguistic justice in the State of Hawai'i for the past twenty years. We are also members of the instructional faculty of a department at the University of Hawai'i whose mandate is to honor and respect the languages spoken and used daily by our diverse communities. We submit this testimony in support of SB 3228, a bill that establishes a statewide language access education and workforce development program at the University of Hawai'i.

We wish to clarify that we are not testifying in our capacity as faculty members of the university, but as language justice workers and advocates — a shared commitment that has united us for more than thirty years.

As the bill recognizes, language access is not a luxury; it is a fundamental requirement for ensuring equitable access to education, healthcare, legal services, and emergency government programs. In a state as diverse as Hawai'i, our multilingual population is one of our greatest strengths. That strength, however, can only be fully realized when communication barriers are addressed through a trained and culturally competent workforce.

SB 3228 provides a structural framework to respond to the shortage of qualified interpreters and translators. The bill's emphasis on the Department of Education's Seal of Biliteracy offers a practical pathway for retaining local talent in the islands. It transforms students' existing linguistic abilities into marketable professional skills and creates a clear bridge from high school to careers in public service, healthcare, and related fields. At the same time, it is important to recognize that additional training is necessary to meet the advanced proficiency standards required for professional translation and interpretation. The programs proposed in this bill would provide that essential preparation.

The integration of this initiative with the Hele Imua internship program through the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations ensures that participants gain meaningful, hands-on experience in public service settings — including agriculture and social services — while potentially receiving financial support to complete their education.

Ensuring that every resident can understand their doctor, participate fully in their child's education, and navigate the legal system is a matter of statewide importance and constitutional responsibility. This bill represents a meaningful investment in workforce development while safeguarding the dignity and equitable treatment of our non-English-speaking residents.

We respectfully urge your support for this measure. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Truly yours,



Dean A. Domingo, MEd  
President, NAKEM Hawaii



Aurelio S. Agcaoili, PhD  
President, NAKEM Conferences &  
Chair, NAKEM Consortium



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**Testimony of the Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights  
In SUPPORT of SB3238 SD1  
Relating to Language Access  
Hearing: Wednesday, February 25, 2026**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Liza Ryan Gill, testifying on behalf of the **Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)**, a coalition of immigrant-serving and immigrant-led organizations working statewide to advance policies that protect immigrant and migrant communities and strengthen our shared future. HCIR respectfully submits this testimony **in strong support of SB3238**.

**Language access is essential for equity and for Hawai‘i to function well.** Hawai‘i is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse states in the nation. According to a State of Hawai‘i agency Language Access Plan citing the 2023 American Community Survey, **24.2%** of Hawai‘i residents age 5+ speak a language other than English at home, and **10.4%** report speaking English “less than very well.” These are our neighbors, coworkers, elders, students, and family members—many of whom are immigrants and refugees—who must be able to access public education, healthcare, legal services, employment and training programs, and other critical state services in a meaningful way.

**SB3238 builds Hawai‘i’s language access workforce from within our own communities.** SB3238 recognizes that language access is necessary across public service settings—including **education, healthcare, social services, legal services, agriculture, and government services**—and that Hawai‘i needs a trained and culturally competent workforce of translators and interpreters to meet that need. The bill would establish a University of Hawai‘i-based program, administered by the UH SEED Office in collaboration with academic departments and key partners including the Department of Education and the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

**This bill creates standards and training so language access is competent, ethical, and consistent.** Under Hawai‘i’s state Language Access Law (HRS Chapter 321C), state agencies must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access and provide **competent, timely** oral language services and translations of vital documents where required. SB3238 directly supports that mandate by creating a structured curriculum that includes:

- training in translation and interpretation, including **ethics, standards, and best practices**;



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[hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com](mailto:hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com)

- specialized instruction for interpreting in public service settings; and
- a certificate of completion, with required educational experiences including internship opportunities through DLIR's **Hele Imua** program.

**Reducing reliance on ad hoc, untrained interpretation prevents harm.** When agencies and institutions lack a sufficient pool of qualified interpreters and translators, people often end up relying on ad hoc interpretation (including family members or untrained staff). Research summarized by AHRQ's PSNet notes that professional interpreters are significantly less likely to commit errors translating clinical information than ad hoc interpreters—errors that can carry real-world consequences. SB3238 helps shift Hawai'i away from improvised systems toward a trained workforce that residents and agencies can rely on.

**SB3238 creates a clear career pathway for multilingual students—including Seal of Biliteracy recipients—while recognizing that proficiency is only the beginning.** SB3238 appropriately prioritizes admission for applicants who earned the HIDOE **Seal of Biliteracy**, while also allowing other community members to qualify by demonstrating biliteracy proficiency (including through the **Global Seal of Biliteracy** credential). This is exactly the kind of “homegrown pipeline” Hawai'i needs: we can honor and build on bilingual students' skills while providing the specialized training required for professional interpretation and translation in high-stakes public service environments.

Hawai'i has already seen the Seal of Biliteracy grow substantially since its early years, demonstrating both student interest and the potential to build a larger multilingual talent pipeline. For example, UH reported that **37** HIDOE graduates earned the Seal in 2017 (the first year), compared to **557** in the class of 2023. SB3238 helps ensure those students—and multilingual community members—have a meaningful next step into college, careers, and service.

**SB3238 strengthens state capacity to meet ongoing language access needs and address known gaps.** The State Auditor has highlighted that Hawai'i has a significant limited-English-proficient population and that interpreters and translators may be needed to navigate a wide range of government activities and services. The Auditor also raised concerns about how Hawai'i builds and verifies interpreter/translator capacity, underscoring why workforce development, training, and clear standards matter. SB3238 is a practical solution: it invests in people and creates structured preparation for this essential work.

**Education and workforce benefits matter too.** Research on multilingual and dual-language learning models shows benefits for language development and student outcomes, reinforcing that



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multilingualism is an asset Hawai‘i should cultivate into real opportunities. SB3238 is aligned with that evidence—and with Hawai‘i’s values.

**Funding is essential.** SB3238 would appropriate general funds for FY 2026–2027, including funding to establish **three (3.0) FTE positions**, to ensure the program can be implemented effectively. HCIR urges the Legislature to **fully fund** this program so it can build sustainable, statewide capacity.

For these reasons, HCIR respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS SB3238**.

With gratitude,

Liza Ryan Gill  
Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)