

MAR 18 2009

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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING A STUDY ON THE AVAILABILITY OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE  
INTERPRETERS.

1           WHEREAS, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters work as  
2 freelance interpreters to provide communication access between  
3 hearing and deaf or hard of hearing individuals; and  
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5           WHEREAS, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the  
6 Blind Division and the Disability and Communication Access Board  
7 prepared a report entitled "Shortage of ASL-English Interpreters  
8 in the State of Hawaii" in November 2000; and  
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10           WHEREAS, the 2000 report identified job security,  
11 consistency of income, stability of schedule, benefits, and  
12 professional development as priorities for working interpreters;  
13 and  
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15           WHEREAS, the 2000 report recommended increasing the pool of  
16 qualified interpreters in Hawaii to improve communication access  
17 for deaf and hard of hearing persons; and  
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19           WHEREAS, the Disability and Communication Access Board is a  
20 state agency that issues administrative rules for the  
21 utilization of communication access services (e.g., sign  
22 language interpreters, real time captioners, and computer-  
23 assisted notetakers) and determines the qualifications of  
24 interpreters and the credentialing of interpreters who do not  
25 hold national certification via a state screening process; and  
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27           WHEREAS, the Disability and Communication Access Board has  
28 developed and implements a state test, the Hawaii Quality  
29 Assurance System (HQAS), for individuals who wish to obtain a  
30 state credential to work as an ASL sign language interpreter in  
31 the State of Hawaii but who do not seek national certification;  
32 and  
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1           WHEREAS, on average, only eight to twelve individuals per  
2 year take and pass the Disability and Communication Access Board  
3 HQAS test; and

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5           WHEREAS, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the  
6 Blind Division has contracted for statewide interpreter referral  
7 services with a private agency, Hawaii Interpreting Services,  
8 which has experienced significant difficulty in securing ASL  
9 interpreters for community freelance interpreting assignments;  
10 and

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12           WHEREAS, state agencies, especially agencies that are heavy  
13 users of interpreter services, such as the Vocational  
14 Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division, and the  
15 University of Hawaii, are also having difficulty meeting their  
16 obligations to provide communication access to deaf and hard of  
17 hearing individuals; and

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19           WHEREAS, the lack of ASL interpreters seriously impacts the  
20 lives of persons who are deaf in obtaining and maintaining jobs,  
21 affecting their health and safety and their interactions of  
22 daily life; and

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24           WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii has an Interpreter Education  
25 and Training Program at Kapiolani Community College whose  
26 purpose, in part, is to train students to become working  
27 interpreters to increase the pool of available ASL interpreters  
28 in the State of Hawaii; and

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30           WHEREAS, although the Kapiolani Community College  
31 Interpreter Education and Training Program has offered many  
32 classes to individuals who have increased their proficiency in  
33 ASL and has promoted the advancement of educational assistants  
34 in the school system with sign language interpreting skills, the  
35 number of graduates who have become working freelance  
36 interpreters has not increased in the community; now, therefore,

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38           BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth  
39 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009, the  
40 House of Representatives concurring, that the Legislative  
41 Reference Bureau is requested to conduct a study to determine  
42 what barriers (rates, benefits, reimbursement mechanisms, etc.)  
43 in existing law, rules, regulations, or policies exist to  
44 securing more community interpreting hours; and



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2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disability and  
3 Communication Access Board and Hawaii Interpreting Services are  
4 requested to assist the Legislative Reference Bureau to survey  
5 current working ASL interpreters in the State of Hawaii; and  
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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study provide  
8 recommendations as to statutory changes that might be enacted  
9 and administrative or program changes that might be implemented  
10 to increase the availability of ASL interpreters, including, but  
11 not limited to changes in areas such as:

- 12  
13 (1) The Disability and Communication Access Board;  
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15 (2) Title 11, chapter 218, Hawaii Administrative Rules;  
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17 (3) The HQAS test;  
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19 (4) The Kapiolani Community College Interpreter Education  
20 and Training Program; and  
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22 (5) The Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the  
23 Blind Division Interpreter Referral Contract; and  
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25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference  
26 Bureau is requested to consult with the Disability and  
27 Communication Access Board, the Vocational Rehabilitation and  
28 Services for the Blind Division, Kapiolani Community College  
29 Interpreter Education Program, Hawaii Interpreting Services,  
30 Hawaii Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Purple  
31 Communications, and user groups of ASL interpreting services in  
32 formulating recommendations; and  
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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference  
35 Bureau submit its findings and recommendations to the  
36 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
37 the 2010 session; and  
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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
40 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Executive Director  
41 of the Disability and Communication Access Board, the  
42 Administrator of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for  
43 the Blind Division, the Chancellor of the Kapiolani Community  
44 College, the Hawaii Interpreting Services, the Administrator of  
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1 the Hawaii Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and the  
2 Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.

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