
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

1 WHEREAS, American Sign Language 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, for individuals who wish to obtain a state
30 credential to work as an American 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 Hawaii Quality Assurance System 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
9 American Sign Language interpreters for community freelance
10 interpreting assignments; 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 American Sign Language interpreters
20 seriously impacts the lives of persons who are deaf in obtaining
21 and maintaining jobs, affecting their health and safety and
22 their interactions of daily life; and
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24 WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii has an Interpreter Education
25 Program at Kapiolani Community College whose purpose, in part,
26 is to train students to become working interpreters to increase
27 the pool of available American Sign Language interpreters in the
28 State of Hawaii; and
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30 WHEREAS, the American Sign Language/Interpreter Education
31 Program at the University of Hawaii, Kapiolani Community
32 College, established an associate of science degree in
33 interpreting and a certificate of completion in interpreting;
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36 WHEREAS, a majority of graduates of the University of
37 Hawaii, Kapiolani Community College, interpreter education
38 program entered the workforce as educational interpreters rather
39 than as freelance interpreters in the community and dramatically
40 increased the number of qualified and credentialed interpreters
41 in grades K-12, thereby meeting a critical need for
42 interpreters; and
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1 WHEREAS, the establishment of a video relay services call
2 center has provided an attractive, new venue for qualified and
3 credentialed interpreters; and
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5 WHEREAS, more interpreters are choosing to work as video
6 relay interpreters because of these new opportunities; now,
7 therefore,
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9 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth
10 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009, the
11 House of Representatives concurring, that the Legislative
12 Reference Bureau is requested to conduct a study to identify in
13 existing law, rules, regulations, or policies such as rates,
14 benefits, or reimbursement mechanisms, if any, that deter
15 interpreter practitioners from working as freelance interpreters
16 in the community and to identify possible strategies to
17 alleviate these barriers and increase the number of available
18 free lance interpreters; and
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20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disability and
21 Communication Access Board and Hawaii Interpreting Services are
22 requested to assist the Legislative Reference Bureau to survey
23 current working American Sign Language interpreters in the
24 State; and
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26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is requested that the study
27 recommend legislation and administrative or program changes that
28 might be implemented to increase the availability of American
29 Sign Language interpreters, including, but not limited to
30 changes in:
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- 32 (1) The Disability and Communication Access Board;
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- 34 (2) Title 11, chapter 218, Hawaii Administrative Rules;
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- 36 (3) The Hawaii Quality Assurance System test;
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- 38 (4) The Kapiolani Community College Interpreter Education
39 Program; and
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- 41 (5) The Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the
42 Blind Division Interpreter Referral Contract; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
2 Bureau is requested to consult with the Disability and
3 Communication Access Board, the Vocational Rehabilitation and
4 Services for the Blind Division, Kapiolani Community College
5 Interpreter Education Program, Hawaii Interpreting Services,
6 Hawaii Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Purple
7 Communications, and user groups of American Sign Language
8 interpreting services in formulating recommendations; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
11 Bureau is requested to submit any findings and recommendations
12 to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the
13 convening of the 2010 regular session; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
16 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Executive Director
17 of the Disability and Communication Access Board, the
18 Administrator of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for
19 the Blind Division, the Chancellor of the Kapiolani Community
20 College, the Hawaii Interpreting Services, the Administrator of
21 the Hawaii Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and the
22 Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.