HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE, 2018
STATE OF HAWAII

H.R. NO. 96
H.D. 1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE STATE TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN
SERVICES, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY STATE
GOVERNMENT FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.

WHEREAS, the State comprises people who speak many
languages; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii is home to a large number of persons with
limited English proficiency who do not speak English as their
primary language and self-identify as having a limited ability
to read, write, speak, or understand English; and

WHEREAS, for persons with limited English proficiency,
language can be a barrier to accessing important benefits or
services, understanding and exercising important rights,
complying with applicable responsibilities, or understanding
information; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of elderly residents and
newcomers are less proficient in English and are challenged in
their daily tasks such as visiting the pharmacy, communicating
with a physician, and managing access to essential services,
including access to municipal water and electricity services;
and

WHEREAS, the State's workforce includes persons with
limited English proficiency who also face challenges because of
their inability to fully understand instructions for safe
workplace practices or requirements and information related to
the safe handling of toxic materials and legal disposal of
harmful waste, which puts them at significant physical risk; and

WHEREAS, children with limited English proficiency face
significant challenges in gaining meaningful access to and
participating in social, educational, and recreational
opportunities when they are restricted by the lack of available
bilingual caregivers, school counselors, teachers, coaches, and
other adults who contribute to the development of their health
and educational success; and

WHEREAS, a significant percentage of visitors to the State
lack proficiency in English and, therefore, are at risk in
situations where they are unable to understand written or verbal
warnings about dangerous surf conditions, impending severe
weather, appropriate responses to emergency sirens or warnings,
and restrictions on interacting with wildlife, including
protected species; and

WHEREAS, one of the underpinnings of our State is the Aloha
Spirit, which is codified in law, and it is with the Aloha
Spirit and good feelings that the people of Hawaii have toward
one another and others that the Legislature finds that ensuring
meaningful access to services, programs, and activities for all
persons is a State priority; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
of 2018, that the State is urged to address the lack of language
support in services, programs, and activities offered by State
government for persons with limited English proficiency; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State shall make it a
priority to:

(1) Remove obstacles to promoting the hiring of bilingual
and multilingual persons in the State's workforce;

(2) Promote and support the use and study of languages
other than English;

(3) Expand the functional and active use of languages
commonly spoken in the State by persons in the
workforce;

(4) Recognize language skills as critical workforce skills
that are essential to the State, the state economy,
and the health and well-being of the people of the
State;
(5) Promote an environment of aloha where the use of languages other than English in any public setting is welcomed, valued, and recognized as essential to building relationships, social ties, and community bonds; and

(6) Promote workplace training, public service campaigns, and educational programs that address bias and discrimination with respect to using languages other than English in public; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State commends and supports the University of Hawai‘i's Hawai‘i Language Road Map and language courses; Department of Education's program for English Language Learners, and Seal of Biliteracy and Multilingualism for Equitable Education policies; Office of Language Access; Disability and Communication Access Board; Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission; and other government and private organizations that promote linguistic diversity as a cultural, civic, and economic asset; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu; Mayors of the Counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui; President of the University of Hawaii; Superintendent of Education; Executive Director of the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission; Executive Director of the Disability and Communication Access Board; and Executive Director of the Office of Language Access.