
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.

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

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

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

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

21
22 WHEREAS, the State's workforce includes persons with
23 limited English proficiency who also face challenges because of
24 their inability to fully understand instructions for safe
25 workplace practices or requirements and information related to
26 the safe handling of toxic materials and legal disposal of
27 harmful waste, which puts them at significant physical risk; and

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29 WHEREAS, children with limited English proficiency face
30 significant challenges in gaining meaningful access to and
31 participating in social, educational, and recreational
32 opportunities when they are restricted by the lack of available



1 bilingual caregivers, school counselors, teachers, coaches, and
2 other adults who contribute to the development of their health
3 and educational success; and
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5 WHEREAS, a significant percentage of visitors to the State
6 lack proficiency in English and, therefore, are at risk in
7 situations where they are unable to understand written or verbal
8 warnings about dangerous surf conditions, impending severe
9 weather, appropriate responses to emergency sirens or warnings,
10 and restrictions on interacting with wildlife, including
11 protected species; and
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13 WHEREAS, one of the underpinnings of our State is the Aloha
14 Spirit, which is codified in law, and it is with the Aloha
15 Spirit and good feelings that the people of Hawaii have toward
16 one another and others that the Legislature finds that ensuring
17 meaningful access to services, programs, and activities for all
18 persons is a State priority; now, therefore,
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20 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
21 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
22 of 2018, that the State is urged to address the lack of language
23 support in services, programs, and activities offered by State
24 government for persons with limited English proficiency; and
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26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State shall make it a
27 priority to:
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- 29 (1) Remove obstacles to promoting the hiring of bilingual
30 and multilingual persons in the State's workforce;
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- 32 (2) Promote and support the use and study of languages
33 other than English;
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- 35 (3) Expand the functional and active use of languages
36 commonly spoken in the State by persons in the
37 workforce;
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- 39 (4) Recognize language skills as critical workforce skills
40 that are essential to the State, the state economy,
41 and the health and well-being of the people of the
42 State;



1 (5) Promote an environment of aloha where the use of
 2 languages other than English in any public setting is
 3 welcomed, valued, and recognized as essential to
 4 building relationships, social ties, and community
 5 bonds; and
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7 (6) Promote workplace training, public service campaigns,
 8 and educational programs that address bias and
 9 discrimination with respect to using languages other
 10 than English in public; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State commends and supports
 13 the University of Hawai'i's Hawai'i Language Road Map and
 14 language courses; Department of Education's program for English
 15 Language Learners, and Seal of Biliteracy and Multilingualism
 16 for Equitable Education policies; Office of Language Access;
 17 Disability and Communication Access Board; Hawai'i Civil Rights
 18 Commission; and other government and private organizations that
 19 promote linguistic diversity as a cultural, civic, and economic
 20 asset; and
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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 23 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Mayor of the City and
 24 County of Honolulu; Mayors of the Counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and
 25 Maui; President of the University of Hawaii; Superintendent of
 26 Education; Executive Director of the Hawaii Civil Rights
 27 Commission; Executive Director of the Disability and
 28 Communication Access Board; and Executive Director of the Office
 29 of Language Access.

