
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that American Sign
2 Language is a vital part of the linguistic heritage of the
3 State, which benefits and enriches hearing impaired and non-
4 hearing impaired individuals. American Sign Language
5 interpreters are routinely provided at private and state
6 functions and events. Introduction to American Sign Language at
7 an early age helps hearing impaired individuals become confident
8 in their identity, and sets the stage for their personal
9 success.

10 The legislature further finds that, although American Sign
11 Language is the fourth most popular language at colleges and
12 universities in the United States, it is not currently
13 recognized as a foreign language in Hawaii. This lack of
14 recognition makes it difficult for Hawaii public schools to meet
15 the needs of hearing impaired students, and to help students who
16 are interested in studying American Sign Language in college
17 prepare for their studies. Forty-two states currently recognize
18 American Sign Language as a foreign language, and have



1 incorporated it into public school curricula. The Department of
2 Education uses the term "world language" in its course
3 descriptions and graduation requirements.

4 The purpose of this Act is to recognize American Sign
5 Language as a world language, and to allow students who pass
6 courses in American Sign Language to receive credit for those
7 courses toward satisfaction of world language requirements.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
9 amended by adding a new section to part II to be appropriately
10 designated and to read as follows:

11 "§302A- American Sign Language. For purposes of this
12 chapter, American Sign Language shall be recognized as a world
13 language, and any public school may offer a course in American
14 Sign Language. A student who successfully completes a course in
15 American Sign Language shall be entitled to receive credit for
16 that course toward satisfaction of a world language requirement
17 of the public school where the course is offered."

18 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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Report Title:

American Sign Language; Official World Language; Public Schools;
World Language Requirement

Description:

Recognizes American Sign Language as a world language, and
allows public school students who pass courses in American Sign
Language to receive credit toward world language graduation
requirements. (SD1)

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not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

