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HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS TO CONDUCT A
FEASIBILITY STUDY ON ESTABLISHING A STATEWIDE CENTRALIZED
LANGUAGE ACCESS RESOURCE CENTER.

1 WHEREAS, for many people in Hawai'i, English is not
2 their primary language, and they have only a limited ability to
3 read, write, speak, or understand English; and
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5 WHEREAS, according to the 2000 census, nearly two hundred
6 ninety thousand people, or twenty-four per cent of Hawaii's
7 population, speak a language other than English at home,
8 including more than two hundred fifty thousand people who speak
9 an Asian or Pacific Island language; and
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11 WHEREAS, for persons who are limited English proficient,
12 language barriers prohibit them from fully participating in the
13 community and can undermine their ability to be self-sufficient
14 and productive; and
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16 WHEREAS, the legislature enacted Act 290, Session Laws of
17 Hawaii 2006, codified as part of chapter 371, Hawaii Revised
18 Statutes, to address the language access needs of limited
19 English proficient persons by, among other things, requiring
20 each state agency to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful
21 access by limited English proficient persons to services,
22 programs, and activities funded and provided by the State; and
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24 WHEREAS, as the lead agency for the State in this regard,
25 the department of labor and industrial relations plays a
26 critical role; and
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28 WHEREAS, all state agencies and other covered entities are
29 required to establish a plan for language access to provide
30 equal, meaningful access to essential government services, such
31 as social services, job training, employment assistance, fair
32 and impartial hearings, and emergency assistance, to all of

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1 Hawaii's diverse population regardless of their primary
2 language; and

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4 WHEREAS, as of December 2007, plans for twenty-three out of
5 twenty-five state agencies and forty covered entities were
6 completed; and

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8 WHEREAS, as the implementation of the plans approaches, two
9 major stumbling blocks hinder meaningful access to essential
10 government services for persons who are limited English
11 proficient. First, there is no comprehensive system in Hawaii
12 to identify language interpreters and translators and to refer
13 interpreters or translators to the state agencies and other
14 covered entities seeking assistance. Second, there is a lack of
15 trained and certified language interpreters and translators who
16 can meet the demand to assist limited English proficient persons
17 in a timely, meaningful manner; now, therefore,

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19 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
20 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
21 Session of 2008, that the Office of Language Access under the
22 department of labor and industrial relations, State of Hawaii,
23 is requested to conduct a feasibility study on establishing a
24 statewide centralized language access resource center. The
25 study will include a survey of existing language resources as
26 well as the language service needs and costs of state agencies
27 and covered entities. In addition, it will include an analysis
28 of the functions of a language resource center, including, but
29 not limited to, the following:

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31 (1) Compiling and maintaining a roster of available
32 language interpreters and translators;

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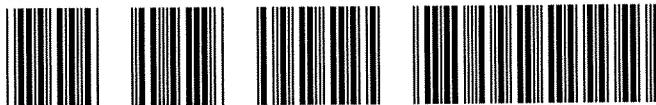
34 (2) Coordinating training programs to increase the
35 availability of qualified language interpreters and translators;

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37 (3) Matching and referring qualified language interpreters
38 and translators to the needs of state agencies and other covered
39 entities seeking assistance;

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