# HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

***KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU***

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 25-37

## RESOLUTION

URGING THE STATE OF HAWAIʻI TO CREATE A HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE COMMISSION.

WHEREAS, in the late 19th century, the Kingdom of Hawaiʻi was among the most literate societies in the world; and

WHEREAS, three years after the 1893 illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, in order to further subjugate the Hawaiian people, the Hawaiian language ("ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi") was outlawed as a language of education in Hawaiʻi; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the near extinction of ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi, and in an effort to preserve, protect, and promote Native Hawaiian culture, history, and language, the Hawaiʻi State Constitution was amended in the 1978 general election to recognize ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi as one of two official languages of the State of Hawaiʻi ("State") and require that Hawaiian culture, history, and language be part of the regular curriculum in public schools; and

WHEREAS, furthermore, a number of historic initiatives were launched shortly thereafter, including ʻAha Pūnana Leo's Hawaiian language immersion preschools, the State Department of Education's Hawaiian language immersion program, and the Hawaiian language programs of the University of Hawaiʻi system; and

WHEREAS, at the national level, the U.S. Congress passed the *Native American Languages Act of 1990 (NALA)*, which established a policy that included preserving, protecting, and promoting the right of Native Hawaiians to use ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi as a protected language within the United States; and

WHEREAS, two gubernatorial proclamations prepared in both ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi and English were issued to recognize February 1994 and February 1995 as "Hawaiian Language Month in Hawaiʻi," followed by a third gubernatorial proclamation that was issued to recognize 1996 as the "Year of the Hawaiian Language"; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaiʻi established the Hawaiʻinuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, Act 28, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013, was the first bilingual statute passed in 70 years, and declared February as "Mahina ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi"; and

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WHEREAS, despite these efforts to revitalize ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ("UNESCO") still classifies ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi as a "critically endangered" language based on the relatively low number of native Hawaiian speakers; and

WHEREAS, to continue perpetuating and revitalizing the Native Hawaiian culture for future generations, ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi must not just survive, but also thrive, and more people must have opportunities to learn it, as well as spaces and occasions to celebrate and use it; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu ("City") that the State of Hawaiʻi ("State") is urged to establish a Hawaiian Language Commission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State consider tasking the Hawaiian Language Commission with, among other things, the following:

1. Coordinating State and City efforts to perpetuate and promote the teaching and learning of ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi;

2. Encouraging more people to learn and speak ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi through regular campaigns, activities, and the provision of helpful resources;

3. Supporting private and public organizations in developing and evaluating their own Hawaiian language plans;

4. Conducting and commissioning research to support the further revitalization of ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi; and

5. Ensuring that ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi remains a living language by developing new words so that it may be used effectively in a changing world; and

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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of the State of Hawai'i, the President of the Hawai'i State Senate, the Speaker of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives, the Chair of the Hawai'i State House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs, the Chair of the Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

INTRODUCED BY:

A. Lypola

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

JAN 27 2025

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

**Report Title:**
Hawaiian Language Commission; State of Hawai'i; 'Ōlelo Hawai'i; Olelo Hawaii

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