

For Official Release
PR 001-04062022
Office of the Governor
Utulei, American Samoa
April 6, 2022



“Governor Lemanu Signs Samoan Language Commission Bill into Law”

“Your invaluable efforts, along with many others in the past, contribute to our on-going quest to preserve our way of life, the fa’asamoa, and to preserve our language.”

Honorable Governor Lemanu P.S. Mauga signed into law the Samoan Language Commission Bill on April 5, 2022. This law will establish a Samoan Language Commission in American Samoa, establish both Samoan and English as the official languages in the Territory; and will amend the Languages of Instructions in the A.S.C.A. The event was held virtually via Zoom with various members of the community that have contributed to drafting this bill.

Governor Lemanu highlighted in his special remarks the long anticipation of this event, “We have come a long way to witness this day. Your invaluable efforts, along with many others in the past, has contributed to our on-going quest to preserve our way of life, the *fa’asamoa*, and to preserve our language. We express our sincerest gratitude to those who have made this day possible.”

Vaitinasa Dr. Salu Hunkin and Peseta Tialuga Seloti gave their remarks on behalf of the committee. Governor Lemanu applauded their achievement, and acknowledged a few pioneers of the Samoan Language such as Fofu Sunia and Honorable Senator Faiivae Godinet. In his final remarks, he commended the Legislature for their support.

Changes will be made to the American Samoa Code Annotated (A.S.C.A.) as enacted by the Legislature of American Samoa:

1. Amendment to A.S.C.A. Section 16.0510 Language of Instruction will read as:

*“Instruction in all public schools shall be in the **Samoan and English** languages. **To ensure students acquire proficiency in Samoan, English and academic subjects, the Department of Education shall develop quality literacy programs based on research and the current needs of students, but the Samoan language may be used when necessary to facilitate teaching the English language.**”*

2. A section will be created to the A.S.C.A. to read as:
1.0110 Official languages. Samoan and English shall be the official languages of American Samoa, except that Samoan shall be required for public acts and transactions only as provided by law.
3. A new chapter will be created in Title 16 A.S.C.A which reads: ***“CHAPTER 17 SAMOAN LANGUAGE COMMISSION OF AMERICAN SAMOA.”***

The Commission will consist of 15 members from the following sectors: Head of the Department of Samoa Studies at the American Samoa Community College, Director or Designee from the Department of Education, three clergy members each from different denominations, a Senate member, a House of Representatives member, Secretary of Samoan Affairs, and three individuals from the public at large with demonstrated knowledge and dedication to the language.

One of the principal duties of this Commission will be to promote, preserve and give guidance to the furtherance of the Samoan language.

###

