

# HAWAI'I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 • HONOLULU, HI 96813-5095 • PHONE: (808) 586-8636 • FAX: (808) 586-8655 • TDD: (808) 586-8692

February 1, 2008

Rm. 309, 10:30 a.m.

To: The Honorable Alex Sonson, Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

From: Sara Banks, Acting Chair, and Commissioners of the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission

LATE TESTIMONY

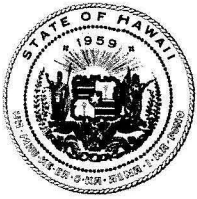
Re: H.B. No. 2896

The Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state-funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai'i constitutional mandate that "no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights because of race, religion, sex or ancestry". Art. I, Sec. 5.

The HCRC supports H.B. No. 2896 which makes an appropriation for a statewide language access bank.

The issue of access to state services for persons of limited English proficiency (LEP) is not new for Hawai'i. The issue was first litigated over twenty-five years ago in the Mangrobang case, in which the State Department of Health entered into a stipulated judgment in a Title VI challenge to limited access for LEP persons. In 2006, enacted Act 290, creating HRS chapter 371, part II, and establishing the Office of Language Access (OLA), affirming the state's obligation to provide language access to services for LEP persons under federal and state law.

H.B. No. 2896 makes an appropriation for a centralized language access bank, implicitly recognizing that the several state departments, divisions, and agencies will need resources to meet their obligations and provide effective language access, and that left to their own devices, will have difficulty doing so. The HCRC supports H.B. No. 2896, and suggests that the role of a language access bank with centralized resources should be expanded beyond the development of a roster of qualified and trained interpreters, to include direct assistance with initial contact and referral, assistance with translation of vital documents, and development of expertise in language access as a statewide resource.



# HAWAI'I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 • HONOLULU, HI 96813-5095 • PHONE: (808) 586-8636 • FAX: (808) 586-8655 • TDD: (808) 586-8692

February 1, 2008

Rm. 309, 10:30 a.m.

To: The Honorable Alex Sonson, Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

From: Sara Banks, Acting Chair, and Commissioners of the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission

## LATE TESTIMONY

Re: H.B. No. 2896

The Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state-funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai'i constitutional mandate that "no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights because of race, religion, sex or ancestry". Art. I, Sec. 5.

The HCRC supports H.B. No. 2896 which makes an appropriation for a statewide language access bank.

The issue of access to state services for persons of limited English proficiency (LEP) is not new for Hawai'i. The issue was first litigated over twenty-five years ago in the Mangrobang case, in which the State Department of Health entered into a stipulated judgment in a Title VI challenge to limited access for LEP persons. In 2006, enacted Act 290, creating HRS chapter 371, part II, and establishing the Office of Language Access (OLA), affirming the state's obligation to provide language access to services for LEP persons under federal and state law.

H.B. No. 2896 makes an appropriation for a centralized language access bank, implicitly recognizing that the several state departments, divisions, and agencies will need resources to meet their obligations and provide effective language access, and that left to their own devices, will have difficulty doing so. The HCRC supports H.B. No. 2896, and suggests that the role of a language access bank with centralized resources should be expanded beyond the development of a roster of qualified and trained interpreters, to include direct assistance with initial contact and referral, assistance with translation of vital documents, and development of expertise in language access as a statewide resource.



# Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

A HAWAII RIGHTS ADVOCACY GROUP • FOUNDED IN 1990

c/o 728 Nunu St. · Kailua, HI 96734 · <http://www.philippinesonline.org/thecoalition/>

## **TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2896 RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS**

Feb. 1, 2008, 10:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 309

**LATE TESTIMONY**

TO:

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment  
Honorable Alex M. Sonson, Chair  
Honorable Bob Nakasone, Vice-Chair  
Honorable House Labor and Public Employment Committee Members

From:

Charlene Cuaresma, MPH, President, Filipino Coalition For Solidarity

My name is Charlene Cuaresma. As president of the Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB 2896. Since its inception in 1990, the Coalition has represented more than 50 Filipino community leaders whose aim is to work for social justice issues to empower Filipinos to make socially responsible contributions to Hawai'i and our global neighbors through education, advocacy, and social action.

The Filipino Coalition For Solidarity is in strong support of establishing a language bank. This is a positive direction to take to provide a resource that will empower both government agencies and the community to be solution-oriented when government programs are utilized and language access is available.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this important bill.

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma  
President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity



## LATE TESTIMONY

### **TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2896 RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS**

Feb. 1, 2008, 10:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 309

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment  
Honorable Alex M. Sonson, Chair  
Honorable Bob Nakasone, Vice-Chair  
Honorable House Labor and Public Employment Committee Members

My name is Amy Agbayani. I serve as Vice Chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations Region XII, which represents the interests of Filipinos in Hawai'i, Guam, and the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands. NaFFAA Region XII is an affiliate of the National NaFFAA. Washington policy-makers, private industry and national advocacy groups recognize NaFFAA as the Voice of Filipinos and Filipino Americans throughout the United States. We are a non-partisan, non-profit national affiliation of more than five hundred Filipino-American institutions and umbrella organizations that span twelve regions throughout the continental United States and U.S. Pacific territories.

NaFFAA is happy to provide our strong support for this much needed service. It is in keeping with capacity building efforts that are essential to support both the community and the government agencies that are dedicated to doing their best to serve all of Hawai'i's diverse people.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this testimony to support the leadership of the Office of Language Access.

Sincerely,

Amy Agbayani, Ph.D., Vice Chair, NaFFAA Region XII