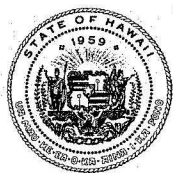


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SERAFIN P. COLMENARES JR.
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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

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TO: Honorable Alex M. Sonson, Chair
Honorable Bob Nakasone, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employment

FROM: Serafin "Jun" Colmenares, Executive Director, Office of Language Access

RE: **Testimony in Support of SB2395 SD2**
Committee on Labor and Public Employment
Hearing: March 11, 2008, 9:00 a.m., Room 309

The Office of Language Access (OLA) supports the intent of SB2395 SD2, which

- (1) Clarifies definitions related to language access;
- (2) Expands the Language Access Advisory Council to include members from each of the counties and an ex officio member from the Disabilities and Communication Access Board; and
- (3) Clarifies that the Executive Director of the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission is an ex officio member of the Council.

This measure is not part of the Governor's Administrative Bill Package.

OLA supports this measure which streamlines the language access law by clarifying definitions and by ensuring that the Council has statewide representation so that limited English proficient individuals in communities throughout the State can be heard.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Hawaii Interpreter Action Network
c/o Hawaii Newspaper Guild
888 Mililani Street, Room 303, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TO: Rep. Alex M. Sonson, Chair; Rep. Bob Nakasone, Vice-chair
House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

FROM: M. Alohalani Boido, M. A., Chair
Legislative Action Committee, Hawaii Interpreter Action Network
Tel.: 946-2558, E-mail: boido@hawaii.edu

HEARING: March 11, 2008; 9 a.m., Rm. 309

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AN AMENDMENT, SB 2395 SD2**, Relating to Language Access

I am Marcella Alohalani Boido, a Hawaii Judiciary certified court interpreter and a founding member of Hawaii Interpreter Action Network (HIAN). HIAN is dedicated to representing Hawaii's court interpreters. We work to elevate professional standards of competence and ethics, and to improve working conditions. I also sit on the Office of Language Access Advisory Council.

HIAN recommends amending Part I, Section 2 (a) (6), as follows: One representative from any accredited institution of higher learning in Hawaii who provides training in interpretation or translation of a spoken language, with preference to be given to someone who holds a nationally or internationally recognized certification or other credential as an interpreter or translator of the University of Hawaii department of language and linguistics who provides professional training in interpretation and translation;

History When the first bill to create an office of language access came before the legislature, I, as a member of an organization of interpreters and translators, facilitated discussion between our organization and the coalition that brought that bill. We suggested that the bill include two more Council positions, which are currently described in Part I, Section (a), (6) and (8).

At the time, the Center for Interpretation and Translation Studies (CITS) had already imploded. All faculty had resigned. The College took back the positions, which had previously been filled by highly credentialed teachers who had been hired competitively at the international level.

Perhaps none of us in the interpreter and translator community thought that CITS would remain as it has, in long-term limbo. It is staffed by non-tenure track instructors, borrowed, with their positions, from other departments. None were hired competitively into their CITS positions. None holds a nationally recognized certification in translation or interpretation.

Today Nationwide, as states implement court interpreter and other certifications, there has been a proliferation of training programs aimed at preparing students for professional work as legal, administrative, and medical interpreters and translators. Most are taught by translators and interpreters who are certified or hold other high-level credentials in Translation & Interpretation (T&I). These programs, in both public and private institutions of higher learning, are in a variety of departments. They support certification, and they prepare students to take and pass certification tests.

The Hawaii Judiciary started court interpreter certification last year. We therefore expect and hope for similar professionally taught T & I programs to develop in Hawaii to meet the need for training.

We'd like to open up the "educator seat" on the Council to certified, professional teachers of T & I who meet and support standards, regardless of the accredited institution or department which employs them.

Please support SB 2395 SD2, with this amendment. Thank you.

CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS

99-1325 Aiea Heights Drive, Aiea HI 96701

To: Rep. Alex Sonson, Chair
House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

From: Margarita Hopkins
President

Date: March 11, 2008 Hearing
9:00 a.m., Room 309

Subject: Support of SB2395 SD2, Relating to Language Access

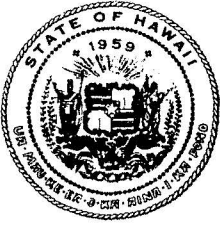
My name is Margarita Hopkins, President of the Congress of Visayan Organizations, a statewide umbrella representing 22 unit organizations of Filipinos of Visayan ancestry.

Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair, and members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment, I testify in strong support of SB2395 SD2 which clarifies definitions related to language access and expands the language access advisory council from 11 to 16 members.

We believe that the amendments proposed by this bill will strengthen Hawaii's language access law and will enable the Office of Language Access to be more effective in performing its functions to ensure compliance with the law and the provision of meaningful access to essential government services to limited English proficient individuals.

We therefore urge your committee to pass SB2395 SD2.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 101 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V/TDD) • Fax (808) 586-8129

LATE TESTIMONY

March 11, 2008

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Senate Bill 2395, SD2 - Relating to Language Access

The Disability and Communication Access Board is a statewide board with seventeen (17) members appointed by the Governor, thirteen (13) of whom are persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full integration, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society. This testimony represents a position voted upon by the Legislative Committee of the Board.

We support Senate Bill 2395, SD2 - Relating to Language Access that clarifies definitions related to language access, and expands the Language Access Advisory Council from 11 to 16 members to include representatives from the counties and the Disability and Communication Access Board. We are willing to serve as an ex-officio member on the Language Access Advisory Council.

We urge you to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICIA M. NIELSEN
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director