

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR120  
Resolution Requesting the University of Hawai'i and the Department of Education to  
Develop, Offer, and Expand Philippine Language Courses

House Education and Higher Education Committees  
April 3, 2008, 2:30 pm  
House Conference Room 309

Rep. Jerry L. Chang, Chair Higher Education Committee  
Rep. Joe Bertram, III, Vice Chair Higher Education Committee  
Members of House Higher Education Committee

Rep. Roy M. Takumi, Chair Education Committee  
Rep. Lyla B. Berg, Ph.D., Vice Chair Education Committee  
Members of House Education Committee

By

Agnes Malate

P.O. Box 61501; Honolulu, Hawai'i 96839  
armalate@yahoo.com/383-9318

My name is Agnes Malate and I am in strong support of SCR 120. I am speaking to you today as someone who has greatly benefited from taking an Ethnic Studies course in high school and Ilokano language and Philippine literature courses in college. Taking these courses reconnected me to my Filipino heritage and instilled an appreciation for Hawai'i's multicultural society that provided me with the foundation to better serve the community.

I belong to the National Federation of Filipino-American Associations (NaFFAA) and Filipino Coalition for Solidarity; serve as the Vice-President for the Friends of Imi Ho'ola (a non-profit organization to help support disadvantaged/underrepresented students participating in the UH School of Medicine's post-baccalaureate, pre-medical program); and a member of the Advisory Council for the Pilipina Rural Project of the Domestic Violence Action Center.

When I arrived in Hawai'i at the age of seven, I knew only a few words of English. In order to facilitate my transition into school and my new home, my teacher instructed for my parents to refrain from speaking Ilokano, my first language, and speak to me only in English. My parents had the foresight to recognize the value of being bilingual and continued to communicate with me in both languages. Despite their lack of hesitancy in keeping the language alive in our home, I found it more desirable to distance myself from it in order to fully be accepted by my peers and teachers. I made a decision to think, speak, and even dream only in English in order to gain more proficiency in my second language. Eventually I became ashamed to speak Ilokano in public and began to call my parents "Mom" and "Dad" instead of the Ilokano forms of "Nanang" and "Tatang". With it came an ethnic identity crises that began to be quelled in the ninth grade when I took an Ethnic Studies class and learned about the experiences of Filipinos and other ethnic groups in Hawai'i. Having a forum dedicated to understanding the peoples and cultures of Hawai'i was liberating and informed me on the significant figures and contributions made by the various ethnic groups.

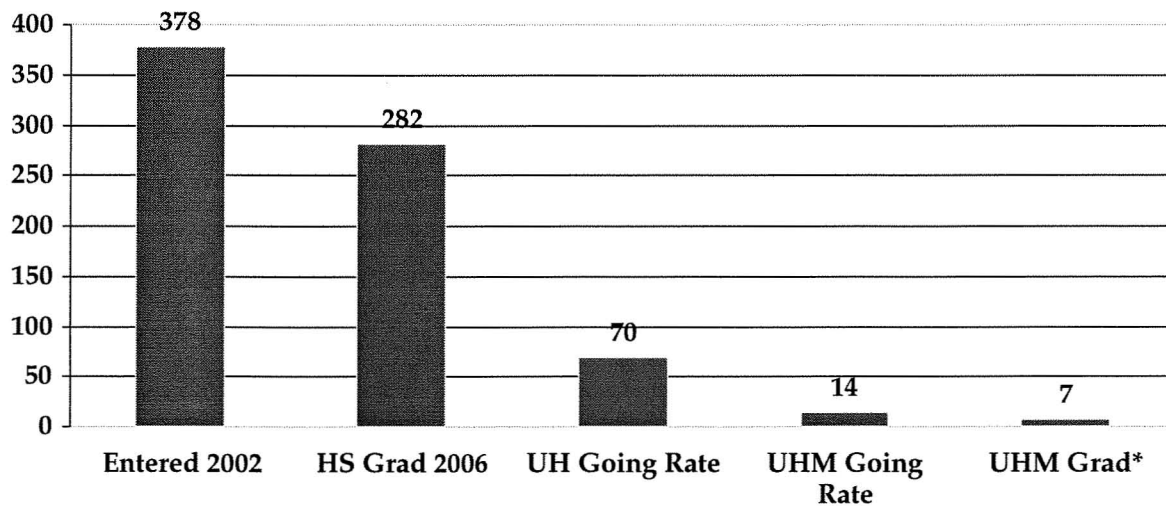
Today, I observe the children of relatives and friends go through the same experiences as they start formal schooling and begin to measure the worthiness of the culture in which they were raised. I

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believe it persists because there is no ongoing institutional recognition and support for including material in curriculum that validates the importance of groups that have been historically considered on the periphery. Offering Philippine languages and Ethnic Studies is one of necessity and a way to ensure that the diverse cultures of Hawai'i have access to quality education, health, and social services.

Studies have shown that students have a greater chance of success if there is a match between the cultures of their home and school. Having Philippine language and Ethnic Studies courses will help to bridge the gap that exists and facilitate school completion rate that remains dismally low at the high school and college levels.

WAIPAHU HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PIPELINE (2002-03 COHORT).



\*Projected number to graduate from UH-Manoa in 2012. It is based on past UH trends of 50-55% graduation rate after 6 years in college.

Source: Waipahu High School, Preliminary Status and Improvement Report, School Year 2006-07. High School Background of First-Time Students, Institutional Research Office, University of Hawai'i, Fall 2006

Of the 378 students in the Waipahu High School 2002-03 cohort, only 70 enrolled in the University of Hawaii system in 2006, with only seven projected to graduate from UH-Manoa after six years in college. Clearly, there is a need to provide instruction that engages students in their learning and provides them with the knowledge and skills to meet the growing need in Hawai'i's community for a culturally competent workforce. A similar trend is found in a number of high schools with a high percentage of Filipinos.

I would like to reiterate my wholehearted support of SCR 120. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and I ask for you to fund the Philippine language and Ethnic Studies courses at the University of Hawaii system.

Sincerely,  
 Agnes Malate

Nora Rimando, Private Citizen  
758 Ho'olana Street  
Pearl City, HI 96782

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 120**  
**House Committees on Higher Education & Education**  
Relating to UH; DOE; Philippine Language Courses  
April 3, 2008, 2:30 p.m.  
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To: House Higher Education Committee  
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From: Nora Rimando, Private Citizen

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My name is Nora Rimando. I am testifying as a private citizen to strongly support SCR 120. I have worked to provide food, shelter, and health care to the sick and infirmed in the State of Hawai'i as a care provider for over 32 years. I am a member of ARCA (Alliance of Residential Care Home Administrators), where I serve as Social Functions Coordinator.

I came to Hawai'i from the Philippines in 1955. I am a native speaker of Ilokano. My husband speaks Tagalog. I am in favor of extending Philippine languages to public schools and the University of Hawai'i system, especially in community colleges and neighbor islands where there are large numbers of Filipino communities.

Two of our three grown children have been fortunate to study Ilokano and Tagalog as students at the University of Hawai'i, where they have graduated. I can attest to the benefits of our sons learning Ilokano and Tagalog. They are better able to understand our Filipino culture and values, even though while they were growing up, there was much pressure to identify as being born in Hawai'i or "local". On one hand, it was unfortunate that my sons, who are not native speakers as my husband and I are, learned to be ashamed of their Philippine languages and culture. On the other hand, when they studied Ilokano and Tagalog at the University of Hawai'i, they became more mature, more respectful, and more patient young men. Knowledge gained from these classes, and their interaction with other language students have had a very positive affect on our family communication. I am blessed that they developed into productive and responsible adults.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the benefits of offering Philippine languages in public schools and the University of Hawai'i system. I believe offering Philippine languages will strengthen Filipino families across the generations, and across ethnic groups. Please support SCR 120. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Nora Rimando, Private Citizen

Melba Bantay  
1450 A'ala Street # 506  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

## TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 120

House Committees on Higher Education & Education  
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From: Melba Bantay, Private Citizen

My name is Melba Bantay. I am proud to provide strong support for SCR 120. For over 30 years, I have worked in the private sector to provide immigration services to Hawai'i's newcomers. Here are some facts:

- 27% of Hawai'i residents reported speaking a language other than English at home and thirteen per cent report they do not speak English at all or well.
- 8% of public school children are enrolled in English as a Second Language, and of this group, the largest percentage speak a Philippine language as their native language.
- 3 major Philippine languages are Cebuano, Ilokano (spoken by a majority of Filipino immigrants to Hawai'i, and Filipino (the national language of the Philippines).

The lack of curriculum offerings in Philippine languages, Filipino-American ethnic studies, and Philippine studies in many public schools and community colleges is a strong statement of marginalization that does not go unnoticed to Filipinos and the Filipino community. Students who are natural heritage speakers stand to lose or cut off their ties to their culture within one generation as a way to fit in and adjust to a society that does not value them. This is unfortunate, because now more than ever, professionals who are trained in Philippine languages and cultures are needed to ensure language access services in the areas of education, health, legal services, immigration, labor, and more.

Your support of this resolution is needed to cultivate the linguistic assets of our Filipino community. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Melba Bantay, Private Citizen

## HEDtestimony

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**From:** Grace Caligtan [graceintelligence@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 03, 2008 11:56 AM  
**To:** HEDtestimony; testimony  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 120

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From: Grace Alvaro Caligtan, Principal, Grace Intelligence

**My name is Grace Alvaro Caligtan and I serve as the Principal for Grace Intelligence, a consulting group dedicated to social cause marketing, advocacy, and grassroots leadership training that promote the advancement of youth and women's wellness.**

I am writing in support of proposed bill (SCR 120). I urge others to support appropriations for curriculum development, expansion of student services in Philippine languages and ethnic studies courses because I believe the bill works to close the gap on disparities and lack of representation in higher education among Filipinos in Hawaii. We cannot allow another generation of students to lose their heritage languages or a sense of their history while attending Hawaii's schools.

SCR 120 also supports the needed Philippine languages pipeline and training required to

meet the demand for culturally competent translators in Hawaii's judicial system and health care industries. The economic vitality and wellness of our Filipino communities is tied in large part to our multiple language capability. This bill supports our ability to bridge the cultural needs of recently arrived immigrants and settled residents.

Thank you much for this opportunity to provide this testimony

Sincerely,

Grace Alvaro Caligtan