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OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

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TO: Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Honorable Clayton Hee, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Tourism and Government Operations

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

RE: **Testimony in Support of SCR67**
Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Committee on Tourism and Government Operations
Hearing: April 10, 2008, 1:15 p.m., Room 229

The Office of Language Access (OLA) supports **SCR67** which establishes September as Language Access Month and respectfully recommends it **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS**.

OLA was created by the Legislature in 2006 to ensure that state agencies and state funded organizations provide meaningful access to state funded services, programs and activities. As the language access law is relatively new, the larger community - including those with a limited ability to speak, read, write or understand English -- may not be aware of the law.

Since being fully staffed in August 2007, the OLA has sought to promote language access through community workshops on the law as well as educational and public service efforts. The dedication of a month long effort to promote language access will help bolster education and awareness of this new law while supporting the OLA's vision of "Language access for all."

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The OLA proposes the addition of a study requirement for the office to conduct a feasibility study on establishing a statewide Language Access Resources Center. Whether state agencies and covered entities will be able to comply with this legislative mandate by implementing their plans for providing language access largely depends on the availability of trained and certified interpreters and translators. In meetings with the language access coordinators, the OLA has learned that there is a dearth of such interpreters and translators in the state.

The establishment of a Language Access Resources Center as a centralized resource would serve as a vital component in establishing a statewide roster of available interpreters and translators, coordinating training programs for them, matching and referring qualified interpreters and translators, training state employees who are the first to respond to requests from customers with limited English proficiency, and the feasibility of eventually working towards ensuring quality of language services through standardization of testing and certification of interpreters and translators who provide language services to state agencies and covered entities.

The proposed amendment is as follows beginning on Page 2, Line 29:

....

WHEREAS, ongoing education and efforts are needed to ensure that language access becomes the "norm" in the provision of government services; and

WHEREAS, having a centralized language access resource center can help ensure that state agencies and covered entities have resources and training to provide language access to such government services; and

WHEREAS, declaring a month dedicated to the promotion of language access, will allow the Office of Language Access in conjunction with community organizations, to showcase the language access law, its requirements, and its benefits; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that September 2008 shall be designated as Language Access Month to raise awareness of the language access laws and the provision of equal access to state and state-funded government services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Language Access under the department of labor and industrial relations, State of Hawaii, is requested to conduct a feasibility study on establishing a statewide centralized language access resource center. The study will include a survey of existing language resources as well as the language service needs and costs of state agencies and covered entities. In addition, it will include an analysis of the functions of a language resource center, including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) **Compiling and maintaining a roster of available language interpreters and translators;**

(2) **Coordinating training programs to increase the availability of qualified language interpreters and translators;**

(3) Matching and referring qualified language interpreters and translators to the needs of state agencies and other covered entities seeking assistance;

(4) Training state employees in positions of public contact that are first to respond to limited English proficient customers who seek to access state-funded services, programs, and activities;

(5) Developing the office's capacity and resources to assist state agencies with their language services needs in the future; and

(6) Standardizing the testing and certification of language interpreters and translators to ensure the quality and accuracy of their services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of language access shall submit a written report to the legislature of its findings and recommendations for the study, including proposed legislation and budget, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2009 regular session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President of the Senate, the Governor of the State of Hawaii, the members of Hawaii's delegation to the Congress of the United States, **the Executive Director of the Office of Language Access and the Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, State of Hawaii.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Filipino American Citizens League

Jake Manegdeg, President
P. O. Box 270126 * Honolulu, Hawai'i 96827

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 67

Urging the Legislature to Declare September as Language Access Month
Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:15 pm
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 229

To: Senate Committee on Tourism & Government Operations Members
Hon. Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Hon. Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Hon. Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor Members
Hon. Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Hon. Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair

From: Jake Maegdeg, President, Filipino American Citizens League

My name is Jake Manegdeg. As president of the Filipino American Citizens League, I am proud to submit our full support of this resolution. The Filipino American Citizens League was formed over ten years ago to contribute to the advancement of civil rights and social justice for minority groups, underserved populations, and vulnerable communities through education, advocacy, and social action.

I served as Chair of the 75th Anniversary Commission of Filipinos in Hawai'i, as well as a commissioner on the Filipino Centennial Celebration Commission. The achievements and contributions of Filipinos in Hawai'i since 1906 have been well documented. But the untold stories of alarming disparities are emerging in public health issues of domestic violence, incarceration, cancer, diabetes, cardio vascular diseases, unemployment, workers rights, and more.

Language Access Month is important because the public must be educated on the civil rights issues underlying the passage of the Language Access law, or Act 290. Provisions of this resolution can foster the spirit of inquiry, self awareness, critical thinking, sense of belonging, empathy, compassion, unity and reciprocity for the greater good. Thank you for the opportunity to support this resolution. Your help in its passage will bring about the type of profound change that is needed to carry out Hawai'i's language access law. Hawai'i cannot afford not to.

Very Sincerely,

Jake Manegdeg,
President
Filipino American Citizens League



Knowledge of history and culture for respect and understanding.

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR 67 and SR 40
Urging the Legislature to Declare September as Language
Access Month**

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**Senate Committee on Tourism and Government
Operations
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:15 pm
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**Senator Taniguchi, Senator Nishihara and
Members of the Committee:**

As President of the **Filipino-American Historical Society of Hawaii (FAHSOH)**, we support Senate Concurrent **Resoution 67 and Senate Resolution 40**, urging the **Legislature to declare September as Language Access Month** to ensure meaningful access to services, programs and activities by limited English proficient persons.

Our non-profit group, the **Filipino-American Historical Society of Hawaii**, was organized in 1980 to bring together individuals who were interested in learning more about Filipino heritage. Our mission is to "foster an appreciation of the heritage and experiences of Filipino-Americans in Hawaii. We believe that knowledge of the history and culture of all peoples affirms individual dignity and teaches respect and understanding."

We believe in the importance of ongoing education and efforts by all state agencies and community organizations to promote language access, and ensure that people of all cultures are treated with dignity and respect.

SCR 67 and SR 40

Page 2

Our group continues to actively collaborate with other organizations and individuals in the community who seek to promote an understanding and respect for the Filipino-American experience and that of other ethnic groups in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 67 and Senate Resolution 40.

Dr. Patricia Brown, President
Filipino-American Historical Society of Hawaii

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 SCR 67

Urging the Legislature to Declare September as Language Access Month
Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:15 pm
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 229

To: Senate Committee on Tourism & Government Operations Members
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor Members
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair

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 this resolution. 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.

Since President Lyndon Johnson passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the telegram message he sent to Martin Luther King immediately after its signing still rings as true today as it did nearly 44 years ago: "Much can be done, and must be done, if the potential freedoms affirmed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are to be translated into practice and meaningful progress." Passage of this resolution to proclaim September as Language Access Month will bring visibility and accountability to the public private partnerships necessary to reach measurable benchmarks. This is a strategic and constructive step to foster cooperation and goodwill in building the capacity for government agencies to demonstrate progress made in systems changes for language access.

Hawai'i Filipinos comprise the largest immigrant group (61%) compared to all the other immigrant groups combined, including Pacific Islanders. Language access to government services will significantly benefit these newcomers in their initial adjustment to Hawai'i. Protecting their civil rights from undue discrimination is important, since immigrants are more likely to contribute to the state economy more than they receive in services.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our support from the community. Your consideration for its passage is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma, President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

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

TO: Sen. Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair; Sen. Clayton Hee, Vice-chair
Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee
Sen. Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair; Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, Vice-chair
Senate Tourism and Government Operations Committee

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

HEARING: April 10, 2008; 1:15 p.m., Rm. 229

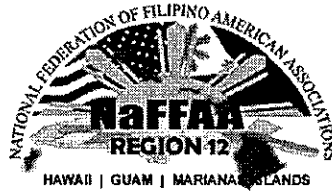
RE: **SUPPORT, SCR 67 and SR 40**
Urging the Legislature to declare September as Language Access Month,
and requesting the Office of Language Access to conduct a feasibility
study for the establishment of a language access resource center

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 as the representative of an interpreter organization.

HIAN supports these two resolutions. We represent interpreters and translators, the professionals without whom there can be only very limited language access. We would be delighted to see more community awareness of the importance of language access to a just and democratic society.

We also agree with the Office of Language Access that a feasibility study on the establishment of a language access resource center should be conducted, and the results of the study reported to the Legislature with recommendations for future action.

Please support SCR 67 and SC 40. Thank you.



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 67
Urging the Legislature to Declare September as Language Access Month
Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:15 pm
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 229

To: Senate Committee on Tourism & Government Operations Members
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair & Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor Members
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair & Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair

From: Amy Agbayani, Ph.D., Vice President
National Federation of Filipino American Associations Region XII

My name is Amy Agbayani. National Federation of Filipino American Associations Region XII (NaFFAA) is in strong support of this resolution. I serve on the Board of NaFFAA 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.

Having also served as the Chairperson for the first Hawaii Civil Rights Commission, I am aware of the need for Language Access Month to shed light on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires all entities receiving federal funds to provide language accessible services to limited English proficient persons. Horror stories abound that expose government entities and their contractors to liability for litigation related to the lack of language access. It is more empowering to build the capacity for language access, than to be embroiled in lawsuits. Approving this resolution for Language Access Month would be a positive step forward in strengthening partnerships for ongoing implementation of Act 290.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony to support this bill.

Please vote yes to its passage.

Sincerely,

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



Nursing Advocates & Mentors, Inc.

... a non-profit organization with a mission to address the global nursing shortage by providing guidance and assistance for nursing colleagues to obtain their professional license in nursing.

P.O. Box 2034 Aiea, HI 96701
E-mail: namihonolulu@yahoo.com

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TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 67

Urging the Legislature to Declare September as Language Access Month
Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:15 pm
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 229

To: Senate Committee on Tourism & Government Operations
Members
Hon. Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Hon. Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Hon. Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Members
Hon. Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Hon. Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair

From: Beatrice Ramos Razon, RN, FADCA
President, Nursing Advocates Incorporated, Inc. (NAMI)

My name is Beatrice Ramos Razon. As the founder and president of NAMI (Nursing, Advocates & Mentors, Inc.), I am in strong support of this resolution. NAMI's membership is comprised of over 75 nurses, allied health care professionals, and Filipino leaders, who are dedicated to improve the health of Hawaii's people by addressing the global issues of a worldwide nursing shortage through the training and mentoring of foreign medical graduate nurses to pass Hawai'i's nurses board exams.

Public support and the ability for both community members and Hawai'i's work force to articulate the importance of language access to government services are literally of grave importance to Hawai'i's diverse populations, where 27% of Hawai'i's residents reported speaking a language other than English at home, 7% are from linguistically isolated households, and 13% report they do not speak English at all or well. These vulnerable groups bear an uneven burden of sickness and death in Hawai'i. Language Access Month seeks to garner community awareness and support to ameliorate these harmful, but preventable outcomes. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. NAMI appreciates consideration of your support to pass this resolution.

Sincerely,

Beatrice Ramos Razon, RN, FACDA

President, Nursing Advocates
and Mentors, Inc.



OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

P.O. Box 17531 • Honolulu • Hawaii 96817

Unit Organizations

Alliance of Residential Carehome Administrators
 Aloha Saguibsib Cultural Foundation, Inc.
 Annac ti Bado iti Hawaii
 Annac ti Batac
 Annac ti Caoayan 2002
 Annac ti Kailokuan iti America
 Annac ti Sinait iti Hawaii
 Asingan Organization of Hawaii
 Badoc-Pinili Aid
 Association of Hawaii
 Banna Association of Hawaii
 Bannatiran Association of Hawaii
 Batangas Association of Hawaii
 Bulacan Circle of Hawaii
 Caballeros de Dimasalang
 Cabugao Sons & Daughters of Hawaii
 Candonians of Hawaii
 Caoayan ISAH
 Cavitenians of Hawaii
 Dingras Association of Hawaii
 Divine Word College Alumni Association
 FilAm Sports USA
 Fil American Citizens League
 Filipino Business Women's Club
 Filipino Nurses Organization of Hawaii
 Filipino Women's Civic Club
 GUMIL Hawaii
 GUMIL Oahu
 Hawaii Filipino Women's Club
 Hawaii Council of Bilingual Educators
 ILAH
 Ilocos Nortenians of America
 INCAT Alumni Association of Hawaii
 International Filipino Society of Hawaii
 Kalayaan Phil.-Hi. Int.
 La Union Circle of Hawaii
 Lingayen Gulf Club of Hawaii

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 67

Urging the Legislature to Declare September as Language Access Month

Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:15 pm

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 229

To:

Hon. Senate Committee on Tourism & Government Operations Members

Hon. Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair

Hon. Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Hon. Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor Members

Hon. Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair

Hon. Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair

From:

Franklin Borromeo, President

Oahu Filipino Community Council

My name is Franklin Borromeo. I am very proud to provide strong support of this resolution. I serve as President of the Oahu Filipino Community Council (OFCC). Our Council is an umbrella organization comprised of sixty-two members (62) that represent a network of non-profit civic groups with a unified vision to improve the lives of our Filipino communities.

Raising awareness and public support for Language Access Month is important because the following groups of Hawai'i residents reported they speak English less than very well: White (Non-Hispanic) 1%, Black or African American 3%, American Indian and Alaska Native 5%, Hispanic or Latino 7%, Asian Indian 15%, Cambodian 36%, Chinese (except Taiwanese) 13%, Taiwanese 59%, Filipino 23%, Indonesian 26%, Japanese 10%, Korean 31%, Laotian 53%, Malaysian 24%, Thai 35%, Vietnamese 61%, Native Hawaiian 3%, Samoan 17%, Tongan 31%, Guamanian or Chamorro 4%, and Fijian 13%. Families, schools, work sites, and government agencies including emergency preparedness stand to benefit or become vulnerable to liabilities such as during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. Your consideration to enact this proposed legislation is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Franklin Borromeo, President

Oahu Filipino Community Council

Unit Organizations

Magsingal Association of Hawaii
 Narvacan/San Antonio Club of Hawaii
 Nueva Vizcaya Association of Hawaii
 Pasuquinos Association of Hawaii
 Philippine Cultural Foundation
 Philippine Nurses Association of Hawaii
 Piddig Association of Hawaii
 Sanchez Mira Association of Hawaii
 San Manuel Pangasinan Association of Hawaii
 San Nicolaneos USA
 San Nicolas Goodwill Foundation
 San Nicolas Teachers of Hawaii
 Santa Lucia Association of Hawaii
 Sarrat Association of Hawaii
 Sarrat International Inc.
 Sinait Nt. High School Alumni of Hawaii
 Solsona of Hawaii
 Tarlac Mutual Club of Hawaii
 TPCP
 Kalihi Ballroom, Inc.
 Sadiri ti San Nicolas iti Hawaii
 Samar Leyte Association of Hawaii
 Sampaguita/Sunflower Club of Hawaii
 San Juan Association of Hawaii
 San Nicolas Nat. High School Alumni
 Santa Marians of Hawaii
 Santa Nicolas Nat. High School Bingao Annex
 Tagalog Association of Oahu
 United Bacarreneos of Hawaii
 United Group of Home Operators
 United Pangasinan of Hawaii
 United Urdaneta Club of Hawaii
 United Vintarinians of Hawaii
 Vigan Association of Hawaii

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Tessie Oculito, RN, President
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TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 67

Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:15 pm Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 229
Urging the Legislature to Declare September as Language Access Month

To: Senate Committee on Tourism and Government Operations Members
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor Members
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair

From: Tessie Oculito, President, Philippine Nurses Association-Hawaii

My name is Tessie Oculito. I am the president of the Philippine Nurses Association-Hawaii (PNAH). We are in strong support of this resolution. As a national affiliate of the Philippine Nurses Association of America, our shared mission is to uphold and foster the positive image and welfare of our constituent members; to promote professional excellence and contribute to significant outcomes to healthcare and society. Our vision is to be an organization responsive to its constituent needs, and to be a force in the world arena of nursing.

Most of our members are first generation Filipinos, who immigrated to the United States in response to fill America's nursing shortage. We have seen the harmful effects of the extinction of heritage languages in our own families, as well as among Hawai'i's multi-ethnic groups, within one generation. We also have seen the advantages of those who perpetuated their language(s) personally and professionally.

The U.S. labor force and American society are at a socio-economic disadvantage because of insufficient cultural and linguistic competencies for critical transactions ranging from inter-generation family discord, to accessing government services and health care, to brokering and closing socially responsible and mutually prosperous business deals.

We support Language Access Month because public awareness has cross-cutting benefits for all of America's diverse families and individuals. The capacity for language access provides a strategic vantage point for an enlightened society to champion international relations challenges for global families and neighbors, as well as for a vibrant economy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please support this resolution.

Sincerely,

Tessie Oculito, RN, President, Philippine Nurses Association-Hawai'i



UNITED FILIPINO COUNCIL OF HAWAII

P.O. BOX 498, Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0498

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 67
Urging the Legislature to Declare September as Language Access Month
Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:15 pm
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 229

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To: Hon. Senate Committee on Tourism & Government Operations Members
Hon. Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Hon. Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Hon. Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor Members
Hon. Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Hon. Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair

From: Bryan Andaya, President, United Filipino Council of Hawai'i

My name is Bryan Andaya. I am the president of the United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH). I submit this testimony to strongly support SCR 67 on behalf of UFCH, an umbrella organization with member organizations from six islands. Current membership includes a total of 5,000 individual members.

At our annual convention in July 2007, our delegates passed a resolution to address disparities faced by Filipinos and other underserved groups. The right to language access in order to utilize government services is a social justice issue. It is unbelievable that government officials still see this as a costly burden, rather than an opportunity for retrofitting an unequal system. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects against discrimination. Even after 43 years since its passage, a significant segment of Filipinos, other immigrant groups, and Pacific Islanders who have limited proficiency in speaking English, continue to be handicapped while attempting to navigate through government institutions for jobs, schools, health care, legal services, and more. We are pleased to do all we can to support your leadership to advance this resolution and to implement the intent of civil rights laws.

Filipinos in Hawai'i want to contribute to the capacity building progress of language access in the 21st century. Language access underlies the very foundation of civil, democratic, peaceful, and productive societies. Please help us make this possible with public awareness and education on language access for Hawai'i's children of all generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan P. Andaya, President

*2006-07

**2007-08