

**GM344**

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



DARWIN L. D. CHING  
DIRECTOR

COLLEEN Y. LaCLAIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

SERAFIN P. COLMENARES JR.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

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

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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
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TO: Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
Honorable Dwight Y. Takamine, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations

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

RE: **Testimony in Support of GM 344 (LITO M. ASUNCION)**

HEARING: Tuesday, March 17, 2009, 9:30 a.m., Room 016

Good morning, Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Serafin "Jun" Colmenares, and I am the Executive Director with the Office of Language Access (OLA). The OLA strongly supports the confirmation of Lito M. Asuncion to the Language Access Advisory Council.

Mr. Asuncion is a current Council member who is now being confirmed to represent the County of Hawai'i. He works as a Program Planner for the Hawaii County Office of Aging. Mr. Asuncion holds a Master's degree in Sociology and is experienced in working with the elderly and with the immigrant community. In addition to his experience with providing elderly services, he previously worked in immigration as an Immigration Information Specialist for the Hawaii County Office of Management, and as a Program Evaluator/Trainer for the Hawaii/American Samoa Bilingual Education Support Center. Mr. Asuncion is also a leader in the Filipino community.

For these reasons, the Office of Language Access strongly supports the confirmation of Lito M. Asuncion to the Language Access Advisory Council.



**CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS (COVO)**  
*Statewide Umbrella Organization*

13 March 2009

The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on  
Judiciary and Government Operations  
State Capitol, Room 016  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Taniguchi and Members:

The Congress of Visayan Organizations, an umbrella of all Visayan organizations in the State of Hawaii, supports Mr. Lito M. Asuncion for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council for a term to expire 30 June 2012.

Mr. Asuncion is an active and well-known leader in the Filipino community on the Big Island. He was several times past president of the Big Island Filipino Community Council, an umbrella of all Filipino organizations on the Big Island. He was also president of the Filipino Chamber of Commerce – Big Island Chapter. In addition to his interactions with the members of the Filipino community, Mr. Asuncion had served other ethnic groups on the Big Island in his past capacity as the Immigration Information Specialist of the Hawaii County Immigration Office. As the Immigration Information Specialist, he provided advice, referrals and information to all people of varied ethnic background needing assistance on various immigration issues. Seeing the tremendous opportunity to serve the aging baby boomer, he took his current position as the Program Planner at the County of Hawaii Office of Aging. In his current job, he assists our many elderly constituents in accessing government programs and services. These people could have not otherwise access such programs and services without his assistance due to their limited English proficiency.

Mr. Asuncion will be a great asset in the Council because of his extensive experience and expertise in dealing with people with varied languages and cultures. We urged your Committee to consider and confirm Mr. Lito M. Asuncion to the Language Access Advisory Council.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

*Margarita L. Hopkins*  
Margarita L. Hopkins  
President



Testimony in strong support of GM 344

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations

March 17, 2009, 9:30 am  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 016

To:

Honorable Sen. Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
Honorable Sen. Dwight Y. Takamine, Vice-Chair  
Honorable Senate Health Committee Members: Sen. Robert  
Bunda, Sen. Mike Gabbard, Sen. Clayton Hee, Sen. Sam Slom

From:

Amy Agbayani, Ph.D., Vice Chair  
National Federation of Filipino American Associations

Measure Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, LITO M. ASUNCION, for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

Report Title: Language Access Advisory Council

NaFFAA is very pleased to provide testimony in support of the re-appointment of Mr. Lito M. Asuncion to the advisory board of the Office of Language Access. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank him for his past participation and continuing service to NaFFAA Region XII.

Although my testimony is on behalf of NaFFAA, my testimony is also based on my personal relationship, community and professional work with Mr. Lito Asuncion. I have know Mr. Asuncion for over 40 years. Mr. Asuncion is bilingual, is deeply rooted in the Filipino community, as well as the community at-large and has academic training and experience in language and cultural studies. He understands state and county government. He can be counted on to bring intelligence and integrity to every decision and conversation. He will continue to be a very hard working member and I respectfully request you approve his nomination.

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NaFFAA Region XII 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.

Sincerely,

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

# 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 GM 344

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations

March 17, 2009, 9:30 am, Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 016

To: Honorable Sen. Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair & Honorable Sen. Dwight Y. Takamine, Vice-Chair  
Honorable Senate Health Committee Members: Sen. Robert Bunda, Sen. Mike Gabbard,  
Sen. Clayton Hee, Sen. Sam Slom

From: Charlene Cuaresma, President, Filipino Coalition For Solidarity

Measure Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, LITO M. ASUNCION, for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

Report Title: Language Access Advisory Council

My name is Charlene Cuaresma. As president of the Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, I want to express appreciation to you for considering the confirmation of Mr. Lito M. Asuncion for the Language Access Advisory Council. 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.

We strongly support Mr. Asuncion's confirmation. As a founding member of Sariling Gawa (Our Own Way), he has contributed decades of leadership training camps for Filipino youth to not only learn about their culture and history, but to set goals that will contribute to improving the quality of life for Filipino families and the broader community. I first met Mr. Asuncion over thirty years ago, when he was a student leader at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, where we served as Operation Manong volunteers to tutor immigrant students during different years.

Mr. Asuncion's passion for social justice has shaped the Sariling Gawa young leaders and board of directors, many of whom are now lawyers, educators, and business leaders. My son, a fourth generation hapa Filipino in Hawai'i, was a high school participant of Sariling Gawa in 1998, when Mr. Asuncion's compelling Sariling Gawa program nurtured the seeds of multi-lingual and multi-cultural assets of Hawai'i's Filipino youth. As a result, my son took such an interest in addressing issues of disparities due to language and cultural barriers in college, that he was moved to become active in student government. After two attempts, he was elected the first Filipino and first from Hawai'i to serve as student body president at the University of California at Berkeley. This personal view of Mr. Asuncion's impact on leadership development, and his dedication to long-term solutions to turn inequities in society for underrepresented people into capacity building opportunities, demonstrates why the Filipino Coalition For Solidarity upholds trust and confidence in Mr. Asuncion to serve on the Language Access Advisory Council. The challenges to support government agencies to provide language access to all, are best met with a visionary and accomplished grassroots leader like Mr. Asuncion on the Language Access Advisory Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our support of his confirmation.

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma, MPH  
President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

# Filipino American Citizens League

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

**Testimony in Strong Support of GM 344**  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations  
March 17, 2009  
9:30 am  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 016

Measure Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, LITO M. ASUNCION, for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

Report Title: Language Access Advisory Council

To:

Honorable Sen. Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
Honorable Sen. Dwight Y. Takamine, Vice-Chair  
Honorable Senate Health Committee Members:  
Sen. Robert Bunda, Sen. Mike Gabbard, Sen. Clayton Hee, Sen. Sam Slom

From:

Jake Manegdeg, President, Filipino American Citizens League

My name is Jake Manegdeg. I am the president of the Filipino American Citizens League. 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 submit this testimony to strongly support the confirmation of Mr. Lito M. Asuncion to the Language Access Advisory Council. As a former legislature myself, and staff of retired Rep. Jun Abinsay, I worked for many years with community leaders to provide language access to government services and institutions. While it was a monumental feat to pass the Language Access Bill in 2006, the real work of implementation now rests on the shoulders of our current leaders. I have served on various commissions with Mr. Asuncion over the years, including the Filipino Centennial Celebration Commission.

I can attest that Mr. Asuncion is a man of integrity and fairness. He works very well with others, and knows how to build cooperation with a focused eye on a shared mission, goal, and producing outcomes. Mr. Asuncion is the right person to help lead the Language Access Advisory Council into the implementation phase of this historic civil rights mandate for our Aloha State.

Thank you for the chance to provide support for this bill. Your help in its passage is greatly appreciated.

Very Sincerely,

Jake Manegdeg  
President, Filipino American Citizens League



# 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  
 Annak ti Kailokuan iti  
 America  
 Annak 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 Norteniens 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 GM 344

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations  
 March 17, 2009, 9:30 am, Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 016

**Measure Title:** Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, LITO M. ASUNCION, for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

**Report Title:** Language Access Advisory Council

To: Honorable Sen. Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
 Honorable Sen. Dwight Y. Takamine, Vice-Chair  
 Honorable Senate Health Committee Members:  
 Sen. Robert Bunda, Sen. Mike Gabbard, Sen. Clayton Hee,  
 Sen. Sam Slom

From: Cirvalina Longboy, OFCC President

My name is Cirvalina Longboy, president of the Oahu Filipino Community Council. OFCC is an umbrella organization that represents a network of non-profit civic groups with a unified vision to improve the lives of our Filipino communities.

I submit this testimony to strongly support the confirmation of Mr. Lito M. Asuncion to serve on the Language Access Advisory Council. Mr. Asuncion has served in well-respected and trusted leadership positions in the Filipino community for nearly forty years. He has co-founded Sariling Gawa, a leadership program for youth, which has been recognized locally and nationally for promoting cultural pride, community service, and social action to foster healthy communities and families through education.

Mr. Asuncion is also an expert in understanding government agencies through his work in gerontology. His business acumen as an entrepreneur will be an asset in strategic collaborations to support government agencies to embrace language access as critical to their bottom line and mission. Thank you for hearing this important bill.

Sincerely,

Cirvalina Longboy, 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  
 Santa Marians of Hawaii  
 School Alumni  
 Santa Nicolas Nat. High  
 School Bingao Annex  
 Tagalog Association of Oahu  
 United Bacarreños of Hawaii  
 United Group of Home  
 Operators  
 United Pangasinan of Hawaii  
 United Urdaneta Club of  
 Hawaii  
 United Vintarinians of Hawaii  
 Vigan Association of Hawaii



March 15, 2009

To: Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi (Chair)  
Honorable Dwight Y. Takamine, (Vice Chair)  
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations

Hearing: Tuesday, March 17, 2009, 9:30am Room 016

Re: Testimony in Support of GM 344 Lito M. Asuncion

From: Tin Myaing Thein, Ph.D. Executive Director, Pacific Gateway Center

Dear Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of Mr. Lito M. Asuncion. I am Tin Myaing Thein, Executive Director of the Pacific Gateway Center and strongly supports the reconfirmation of Mr. Asuncion to a second term as member of the Language Access Advisory Council.

He earned his Master's degree in Sociology and is currently a Program Planner at the Hawaii County Office of Aging. He is very experienced in working with the elderly and with immigrant populations. He worked in immigration as an Immigration Information Specialist for Hawaii County. Besides representing the County of Hawaii on the Language Access Advisory Council, he is also an acknowledged leader in the Filipino community. Lito has worked long and hard for the rights of those whose first language is not English and is well known for his persistence in advocating for these populations.

As an organization that has served immigrants and refugees and the low-income population for 35 years, Pacific Gateway Center is well aware of Mr. Asuncion's sincerity in serving the immigrant population and their rights to language access. We strongly support the confirmation of Mr. Lito Asuncion to his second term as member of the Language Access Advisory Council. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Aloha,  
Tin Myaing Thein

# Filipinos for Affirmative Action

3432 B-1 Kalihi Street· Honolulu. HI 96819

## TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM 344

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations

March 17, 2009, 9:30am

Hawai`i State Legislature

Hawai`i State Capitol, Room 016

### Measure Title:

Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council  
Gubernatorial Nominee, LITO M. ASUNCION,  
for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

To: Honorable Sen. Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
Honorable Sen. Dwight Y. Takamine, Vice-Chair  
Honorable Senate Health Committee Members: Sen. Robert Bunda, Sen. Mike  
Gabbard, Sen. Clayton Hee, Sen. Sam Slom

From: Agnes Malate, MEd, Filipinos for Affirmative Action  
P.O. Box 61501; Honolulu, HI 96839 \* [armalate@yahoo.com](mailto:armalate@yahoo.com); (808) 388-3019

My name is Agnes Malate and a member of the Filipinos for Affirmative Action. I am delighted to provide strong testimony in support of Lito M. Asuncion's re-appointment to the Advisory Board to the Office of Language Access. I have known Mr. Asuncion for 28 years as a mentor for first-generation and immigrant youths, a community leader on Oahu and Hawai`i islands, and a tireless worker and advocate for the elderly and immigrants.

I have been privileged to be one of the youth that Mr. Asuncion has mentored through his work with Sariling Gawa, a youth leadership development organization, and worked with him upon graduation on issues concerning first-generation college students at the University of Hawai`i at Hilo and the immigrant community. He leads by example and has demonstrated throughout his professional career that he is committed to eliminating barriers to services for the elderly and immigrant population, and has worked with county and state agencies to institute sound policies.

Mr. Asuncion's academic and professional background in sociology and public health are valuable assets that he will continue to bring to the advisory board. He is well familiar with the challenges facing immigrants, but more importantly, he is knowledgeable of the resources that exist and effectively mobilizes his professional and community network to find solutions to these issues and problems.