

**GM351**

## TESTIMONY

EDELENE OSEDIL URIARTE  
Micronesian Community Network, President  
MA, Pacific Islands Studies  
Pacific Island Development Program, (East-West Center)  
Pacific Island Report Assistant Editor  
Pan Pacific Association member

Submission Of A Testimony for the April 12, 2010 hearing as a  
candidate for the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC),  
Gubernatorial Nominee, EDELENE O. URIARTE, for a term to expire  
6-30-2014.

## COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
Senator Dwight Y. Takamine, Vice Chair

### NOTICE OF HEARING

Date: Monday, April 12, 2010

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 325,  
State Capitol – 415 South Beretania Street

### AGENDA

Testimony: GM 351

April 9, 2010

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

From: Edelene O. Uriarte

Re: Testimony

Aloha and Alii to Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Takamine, and the distinguished committee members. Thank you for allowing me to present a brief background of myself. I hope to provide substantial information that would allow for your consideration and approval as a member of the Language Access Advisory Council.

I was born and raised in Palau, an island geographically located in Micronesia but politically self-governing and not included in the Federated States of Micronesia. After high school I graduated from the Adventist University of the Philippines with a BA in English before moving to Hawai'i. I have recently defended my MA thesis, "Palauan Studies: The Rise of a New Program at the Palau Community College", from the program of Pacific Islands Studies, at UH Manoa. I am currently the President of the Micronesian Community Network and a part-time Assistant Editor for the Pacific Island Report under the Pacific Island Development Program at East-West Center. I am also an active member of the Pan Pacific Association (PPA). PPA is an organization open to Pacific Islanders enrolled at the University of Hawai'i; current president of PPA is from Papua New Guinea.

My interests lie within my personal experiences as a Palauan who speaks English as a second language. Because of my experiences, I have a firsthand knowledge of how people struggle in their attempts to access state services such as health care, education, and housing. For the past three years my research and interviews have worked to support the notion that education and access to basic needs are vital. Each individual who enters the state of Hawai'i has a history, and with each story, we should provide equal opportunity. I will be honored to take on this challenge because I believe that positive enforcements come about from concerned individuals who understand and believe that no one should be left behind.

From my experiences as a Palauan residing in Hawai'i, I have gained understanding and knowledge in how to better serve the community; and I believe that becoming a council member for the Office of Language Access will serve that purpose.

Thank you.

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



DARWIN L.D. CHING  
DIRECTOR

COLLEEN Y. LaCLAIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

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April 8, 2010

To: The Honorable Brian Taniguchi, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations

Date: April 12, 2010

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 325, State Capitol

From: Darwin L.D. Ching, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

**GM 351 – EDELENE O. URIARTE  
Language Access Advisory Council**

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations supports the confirmation of EDELENE O. URIARTE.

Ms. Uriarte is a current graduate student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, in their Pacific Islands Studies Masters program. She is a member of the Micronesian Community Network and is a co-founder of Belau Mei, which is a resource based organization that supplies information Palau migrants.

Ms. Uriarte's academic research experience and liaison networking with various organizations that assist Micronesians, including the Micronesian Community Network at the McKinley Community School, make her a strong asset for the council. Her background agreeably aligns with the council's goals and commitment to individuals with limited English proficiency.

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



DARWIN L. D. CHING  
DIRECTOR

COLLEEN Y. LaCLAIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

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April 12, 2010

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 351 (EDELENE O. URIARTE)**

HEARING: Tuesday, April 12, 2010, 9:30 a.m., Room 325

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Serafin "Jun" Colmenares, Executive Director of the Office of Language Access (OLA). The Office of Language Access strongly supports the appointment of Edelene Osedil Uriarte to the Language Access Advisory Council. She will be representing the Micronesian community as the "member from the limited English proficient population who has an interest in the provision of oral language services."

Edelene Osedil Uriarte, a native of Palau, earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the Adventist University of the Philippines in 2003. Currently, she is finishing her Master of Arts program, major in Pacific Islands Studies, at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Edelene is a recipient of scholarships from the Center of Pacific Islands Studies Department, as well as the Palau National Scholarship Board, for her masteral studies.

For the past three years Edelene has served the Micronesian community as a member of the Micronesian Community Network. In 2007 she coordinated with the Department of Health to deploy a *Health Assessment Survey* to the Micronesian community in Honolulu. In 2008, she co-founded *Belau Mei*, which is a resource based organization that supplies important information to Palau immigrants traveling to Hawaii in search of education, jobs, opportunities, and health care. Ms. Uriarte has a well-grounded knowledge of the Micronesian people and culture. Her input will be extremely valuable in assessing and addressing the needs of the growing Micronesian population in the State of Hawaii.

Given her experience with the Micronesian community, her fluency in the Palauan and Tagalog languages, and her eagerness to serve the limited English proficient community, Edelene Uriarte will be a valuable resource and asset to the Language Access Advisory Council.

For these reasons, the Office of Language Access strongly supports the appointment of Edelene Osedil Uriarte to the Language Access Advisory Council.

April 12, 2010

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

FROM: Brian T. Alofaituli from Sāmoa

RE: Testimony in Support of GM 351 (EDELENE O. URIARTE)

HEARING: Tuesday, April 12, 2010, 9:30 a.m., Room 325

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

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify before your committee. My name is Brian T. Alofaituli and I am currently a M.A. Graduate Student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am from the islands of Sāmoa. I have known Edelene for the past academic school year and she exemplifies leadership and integrity in both her academic work as well as within her relationships with people. For those reasons I support the appointment of Edelene Osedil Uriarte to the Language Access Advisory Council.

Edelene Osedil Uriarte is currently finishing her M.A. degree in Pacific Islands Studies, at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Edelene's academic experience has given her the ability to serve her Micronesian community well through organizations such as the Micronesian Community Network and Belau Mei. She is fluent in both Palauan and Tagalog. That experience will most definitely assist the Language Access Advisory Council in accomplishing your goals and objectives. In addition to her professional experience, Edelene is a very responsible individual that values good work ethics that will be of great value to your organization.

I strongly support Edelene because I know her capacity to push for success in everything she does. Currently we serve a part of the Pan-Pacific Organization at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. This organization is comprised of graduate students of different ethnic backgrounds, but mostly from the Pacific Islands Region (Sāmoa, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Guam, Palau, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Tuvalu, etc.). Edelene has been a strong member who has encouraged cultural sensitivity and awareness as well as community building. Her leadership skills and her push for success will exemplify in her work. I support the appointment of Edelene Osedil Uriarte to the Language Access Advisory Council.



April 9, 2010

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

From: Canisius T. Filibert, Outgoing President, Micronesian Community Network

Re: Testimony in Support of GM 351 (Edelene O. Uriarte)

Hearing: Monday, April 12, 2010; 9:30 a.m. – Rm. 325

Aloha and Alii Senator Taniguchi, Senator Takamine, and distinguished committee members. I want to thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of Ms. Uriarte's selection to be a member of the Office of Language Access's (OLA) Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC).

As the outgoing president for the Micronesian Community Network (MCN), I am delighted to inform you that Ms. Uriarte has also been elected to be the next president for MCN. Although not planned in this manner, it still makes logical sense that a Micronesian presence be part of the LAAC. I also served as president of MCN and also the Micronesian representative on the council.

It is very important to note that Ms. Uriarte is also a graduate student in the Center for Pacific Island Studies (CPIS) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa campus. She also has written papers and conducted interviews with Micronesians in the state so she is well aware of the language issues and concerns faced by Micronesians.

I have known Edelene Uriarte for about 5 years and it was through MCN that we became acquainted. In fact, her earlier involvement with MCN was volunteering her time as the coordinator for our home office located at the McKinley Community School for Adults. Her professional aspirations are toward community involvement and civic duty. Thus, she has concentrated on the Micronesian community of Hawai'i as the focal point of her studies and future career. By becoming the newly elected president of MCN and also becoming a confirmed member of the LAAC, only adds to the intellectual pool and quality of perspectives in addressing language access issues in the state and especially for Micronesians.

Respectfully submitted,

Canisius Tkel Filibert

*Former president of MCN*

*Senior trainer for the Micronesian Cultural Awareness Project*

*PREL program director and ELL teacher trainer*



April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010

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

FROM: Tammy Tabe, Graduate Student of the Center for Pacific Islands Studies.

RE: **Testimony in Support of GM 351 (EDELENE O. URIARTE)**

HEARING: Tuesday, April 12, 2010, 9:30 a.m., Room 325

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

My name is Tammy Tabe from the Solomon Islands, and I am honored today to testify for my friend Edelene Osedil Uriarte. Edelene comes from the island of Palau. She attended the Seventh day Adventist Elementary and Palau Mission Academy High School while she was in Palau. In 2001, Edelene left Palau to attend the Adventist University of the Philippines and later graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 2003. After graduating she moved back to Palau and worked at the Palau Supreme Court as an assistant for Judge Lourdes Materne for a year before moving to Hawaii. In Hawaii she worked as an agent for Panda Travel Agent for more than a year before pursuing a Master of Arts degree at the University of Hawaii, Manoa.

I met Edelene at the Pan Pacific Association (PPA) meeting at East-west Center last year through a friend and have known her for almost a year now. Edelene has been a great mentor to me. She is very approachable and easy to talk to. She communicates Palauan language fluently and has a deep knowledge of the Palauan culture and way of life. She is out-going and enjoys out-door activities and sports.

Her interests and passion are geared towards helping people who have recently moved to Hawaii to have access to better education, health facilities and living conditions. She is also very interested in helping people who lack English proficiency in accessing facilities and opportunities offered by the State.

Edelene has been committed to the meetings and activities of the PPA since she became a member of the group early last year (2009). She is very responsible and always contributes

significantly to the events organized by the PPA. She is currently working as a part-time assistant editor for the Pacific Island Report (PIR) under Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) at the East-west Center while studying. Edelene is also a member of the Micronesian Community Network (MCN) for almost 3 years and is currently one of the elected presidential candidates for the group.

Given these qualities, I strongly recommend and support Edelene Osedil Uriarte as a potential member to serve within the Language Access Advisory Council.

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

FROM: Ebil Matsutaro (from Palau), Graduate Student, Pacific Islands Studies,  
University of Hawaii at Manoa

RE: **Testimony in Support of GM 351 (EDELENE O. URIARTE)**

HEARING: Tuesday, April 12, 2010, 9:30 a.m., Room 325

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Ebil Matsutaro, and I am a full-time graduate student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in the Pacific Islands Studies masters program. I have known Edelene Oseldil Uriarte since childhood, when we were both growing up in Palau during elementary and high school. A year above me in school, I remember working with Edelene on various projects such as a winning entry in the local science fair, retreats that we helped plan on the weekends, and other volunteer activities. At this time, Edelene is two years ahead of me in the Pacific Islands Studies, and her advice to me about the program has been invaluable.

Edelene has a number of strengths to offer the Office of Language Access (OLA). Having grown up in Palau as well as nearly completing the requirements for a masters degree in Pacific Islands Studies, Edelene has intimate knowledge both of the Palauan language and culture, as well as the various issues facing Micronesians in modern society, especially abroad in places like the state of Hawaii. I have no doubt that her experience and interest in Micronesian issues make her a valuable asset to OLA.

As one example of her innate ability to represent Micronesian interests, I was fortunate enough to witness Edelene defend her masters thesis, which focused on the need for a Palauan Studies curriculum at the Palau Community College back home. She did a phenomenal job weaving Palauan legends into a cohesive analysis of higher education that was both revealing and highly intellectual. Her ability to represent Palauan interests so well on paper and in person will serve her well as a member of the Language Access Advisory Council.

In addition, I currently work with Edelene on activities planned by the Pan Pacific Association, an organization of Pacific Islander students that aims to represent the Pacific Islands in and around the University of Hawaii campus. She can always be counted on help plan our events and support our activities. Once she commits to something, she is truly committed to seeing it through.

Currently Edelene has just accepted the position of Micronesian Community Network (MCN) president, and in my view, such a position is very much in line with her duties as a council member for the Language Access Advisory Council. I witnessed the overwhelming support of fellow MCN members in nominating her for the presidency, and their confidence in her abilities speaks to her strong reputation within the Micronesian community as well.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly recommend Edelene Oseldil Uriarte to the Language Access Advisory Council, and have no doubt you will have no regrets in appointing her.

Thank you very much for your time:

Sincerely,

Ebil Matsutaro

(415) 299-2556

[ebil@hawaii.edu](mailto:ebil@hawaii.edu)

April 9, 2010

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

FROM: James Perez Viernes, MA  
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Center for Pacific Islands Studies  
PhD Candidate, Department of History  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

RE: Testimony in Support of GM 351 (EDELENE O. URIARTE)

HEARING: Tuesday, April 12, 2010, 9:30 a.m., Room 325

Hāfa adai and Aloha, Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations:

Please accept the following testimony as my enthusiastic support of Edelene O. Uriarte's nomination to serve on the council for the Office of Language Access under the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

I have known and worked with Edelene over the past three years, having first met her when she began her graduate studies at the Center for Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. As part of a larger cohort of incoming students, Edelene stood out as a strong leader among her peers. Her participation in the Pacific Islands Studies program offered her fellow students insight into a Palauan perspective of the world, one that would have otherwise been unavailable to them. As a graduate student, Edelene further demonstrated noteworthy collegiality by supporting her fellow graduate students in their own pursuits. These qualities stood out immediately upon her admission to the program and consistently throughout her time at the center.

Edelene's recently-defended MA thesis which proposes a Palauan Studies curriculum for college students promises to advance the development of Pacific Islands Studies in Micronesia. Her research that promotes the employment of indigenous epistemologies more appropriate to Palauan students' ways of knowing and understanding the world around them stands out as a worthy contribution to a growing body of knowledge, and this particular work has proven inspirational to the center's current students who continue to pursue their own research agendas.

Edelene's commitment to the Micronesian community extends beyond her academic pursuits. Formerly employed by the Micronesian Community Network, as well as maintaining an active presence at regular meetings, Edelene has established strong ties

with the Micronesian communities of Hawai'i. These ties will prove valuable in a potential appointment to the Office of Language Access under the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. I have no doubt that Edelene is the appropriate candidate for this post, and her educational, professional, and community experience will offer the council the necessary expertise to fulfill its mission.

If there is anything further that I can provide on behalf of Edelene Uriarte, please do not hesitate to contact me at (808) 772-0866 or via email at [james.viernes@gmail.com](mailto:james.viernes@gmail.com). Un dangkulo na si Yu'us ma'āse and mahalo nui loa for your consideration of my input.

Respectfully,

James Perez Viernes