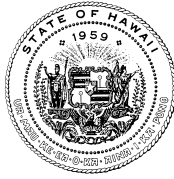


GM 843



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

DWIGHT Y. TAKAMINE
DIRECTOR

AUDREY HIDANO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
www.hawaii.gov/labor

April 11, 2012

The Honorable Clayton Hee, Chair
The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Nominee, Melba Bantay (GM 843)
As a Member of the Language Access Advisory Council

Wednesday, April 11, 2012
10:00 a.m., Rm 16, State Capitol

Testimony of Dwight Takamine, Director,
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

The department supports the confirmation of Melba Bantay to the Language Access Advisory Council. The Language Access Advisory Council serves as an advisory board to the executive director of the Office of Language Access (OLA), which provides centralized coordination and assistance to State agencies and organizations to ensure that no person is denied access to State or State-funded services due to their limited ability to speak, read, write, or understand the English language.

Currently the Program Director for Immigration Services and Refugee Reception and Placement Programs at Catholic Charities Hawaii, Ms. Bantay has been serving Catholic Charities in various positions, including as Statistician, Supervisor of Immigrant Services, and Program Director of Employment Core Services for Low-Income Immigrants since 1985. Ms. Bantay's previously worked as a religion teacher at Star of the Sea High School, an Orientation Director at Maryknoll Sisters in New York, and a Parish Sister in Nicaragua.

Ms. Bantay lived and worked as a missionary in Guatemala and Nicaragua and worked with Spanish Jesuit priests in the formation of the Basic Christian Communities among

GM 843

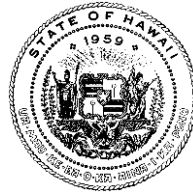
April 11, 2012

Page 2

the poor in Managua, Nicaragua. Among her many recent community activities, Ms. Bantay has been involved with the Hawaii Covering Kids Ad Hoc Committee, the Interagency Council of Immigrant Service Providers, the Honolulu Catholic Diocese Prison Ministry, the St. Theresa Parish Pastoral Council, the Hawaii Coalition for Immigration Reform, and the Language Access Advisory Council.

Ms. Bantay holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Commerce from Far Eastern University in the Philippines, a Master of Arts Degree in Theology from Maryknoll School of Theology in New York, and Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of Hawaii. She is also accredited by the U. S. Board of Immigration Appeals as an agency representative to represent immigration clients before the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services since 1994. In addition to English, Ms. Bantay speaks Tagalog and Spanish.

I urge you to confirm Melba Bantay to the Language Access Advisory Council where, if appointed, she will continue to serve as a valued member.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

April 11, 2012

**Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Director of Health**

**GM 843, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access
Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MELBA BANTAY, for a term to expire
6-30-2016.**

1 **Department's Position:** Strong support

2 **Fiscal Implications:** None

3 **Purpose and Justification:** The Hawaii Department of Health strongly supports the nomination of Ms.
4 Melba Bantay to the Language Access Advisory Council.

5

6 Ms. Bantay's career has clearly demonstrated her faith and passion for helping others achieve their
7 potential, whether through her work as a Parish Sister, an educator, and on through the ranks of human
8 services delivery programs. In particular, her focus of the past 20 years on immigrants has been
9 inspirational not only to those coming to Hawaii seeking refuge or opportunity, but for those of us long
10 established here.

11

12 Ms. Bantay's capacity for human kindness is complemented by her successful professional experiences
13 as a senior manager and leader in the non-profit sector. Such credentials are invaluable for an advisory

1 council which must set a path towards the ideals of social justice balanced against what can practically
2 be accomplished within statute, public opinion, and budget.

3

4 I urge this Committee to confirm the nomination of Ms. Bantay in the strongest terms. Her participation
5 on the Council will further the goals of health equity and social justice we all share for Hawaii.

6

7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

NEIL ABERCROMIE
GOVERNOR



DWIGHT TAKAMINE
DIRECTOR

AUDREY HIDANO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

SERAFIN P. COLMENARES JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 322
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
www.hawaii.gov/labor/ola
Phone: (808) 586-8730 / Fax: (808) 586-8733
Email: dlir.ola@hawaii.gov

TO: Honorable Clayton Hee, Chair
Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor

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

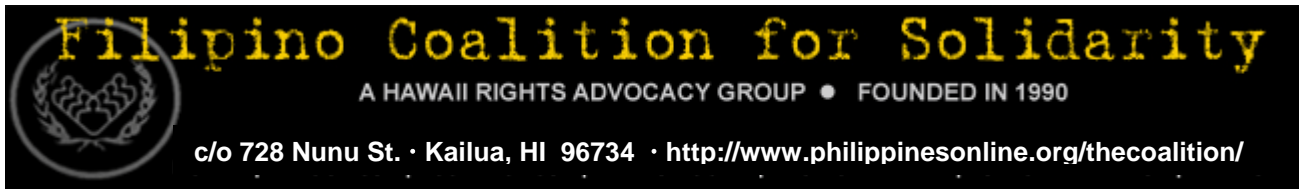
RE: **Testimony in Support of GM843 (MELBA BANTAY)**
Language Access Advisory Council

HEARING: Wednesday, April 11, 2012, 10:00 a.m., Room 016

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Serafin “Jun” Colmenares, Executive Director of the Office of Language Access (OLA). The OLA strongly supports the reappointment of Melba Bantay as member of the Language Access Advisory Council.

Melba Bantay has been with Catholic Charities Hawai`i since 1985. She is the Program Director of three of Catholic Charities’ programs: Employment Core Services to Immigrants and Low-Income Persons, Immigration, and Refugee Services. Melba is accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals since 1994 to represent immigration clients before the USCIS. She earned her B.A. in Commerce from Far Eastern University in Manila, an M.A. in Religious Studies from Maryknoll School of Theology in New York, and a Masters in Public Health from the University of Hawaii.

Ms. Bantay brings a lot of knowledge and experience, as well as commitment, to the Language Access Advisory Council and should be confirmed as a member.



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM 843

Senate Committee on Health

April 11, 2012 10:00 a.m.

Hawai'i State Legislature, Room 016

To: Honorable Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair
Honorable Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice-Chair
Honorable Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee Members: Sen. Mike Gabbard,
Sen. Les Ihara, Sen. Sam Slom

From: Charlene Cuaresma, Past President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

Measure Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MELBA BANTAY, for a term to expire 6-30-2016.

Dear Sen. Hee, Chair; Sen. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair; and Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee Members:

My name is Charlene Cuaresma. As past president of the Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, I strongly support the confirmation of Governor Abercrombie's nominee, Melba Bantay, to the Language Access Advisory Council. Since its inception in 1990, the Coalition has represented more than 50 Filipino community leaders, whose aims are to work for social justice issues and to empower Filipinos to make socially responsible contributions to Hawai'i and our global neighbors through education, advocacy, social action and service.

I have known Ms. Bantay for many years when we served as members of the Inter-Agency Council for Immigrants and Refugees. She mobilized key support for the passage of Hawai'i's Language Access Law, Act 290 as amended by Act 208. The Coalition is confident that Ms. Bantay's decades of expertise in immigrant services informs her of the importance of language access to government services by people whose first language is not English. She is a dedicated, compassionate, and tenacious advocate for social justice. She is highly regarded for her knowledge of immigrant rights, civil rights, and . She is competent, organized, and will be an asset to the Council.

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

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma
Past President
Filipino Coalition for Solidarity



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

FROM: Diane M. Terada, Division Administrator

DATE: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 (10:00 a.m., Room 016)

RE: GM 843 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MELBA BANTAY, for a term to expire 6-30-2016

On behalf of Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH), I would like to express full support for the appointment of Melba Bantay, to the Language Access Advisory Council.

I have worked closely with Melba for over six (6) years and have known her for over 20 years. She has worked for Catholic Charities Hawaii for 27 years and is our resident expert on all things related to immigration law and refugee services. She has 23 years of experience working with and for immigrants and refugees and as the Program Director of CCH's General Immigration and Refugee Services, Melba has worked with hundreds of individuals who have come to the United States and speak little or no English.

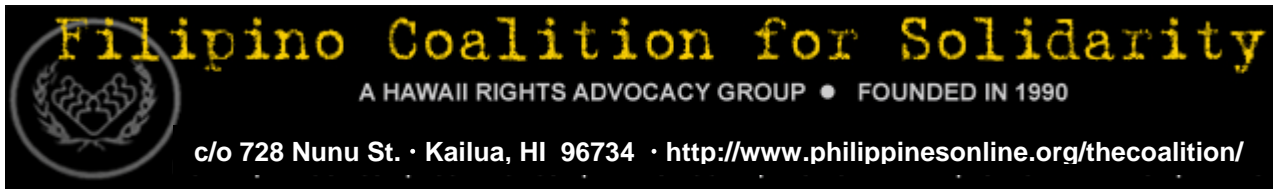
Melba's years of experience working with diverse cultures and advocating for people in need started in the 1970's, when she worked in Nicaragua doing leadership development. And she understands personally what it is like to live and work in a country where the primary language spoken is not your native language. She advocates at the Federal and State levels for justice for immigrants.

Melba has a Master's degree in Public Health and has also completed the Court Interpreter training provided by the State Judiciary. In addition, she is accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals of the U.S. Department of Justice to represent immigrants and refugees before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Melba is a passionate advocate for immigrants and refugees. She believes in the goal of the Office of Language Access – that all people should have access to State-funded services – and that language should not be a barrier to needed services.

I highly recommend Melba Bantay's appointment to the Office of Language Access Advisory Council and ask that you confirm her nomination. Her years of professional experience in this field and her commitment to serving immigrants and refugees will make her an asset to the Council and to those she serves. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.





TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM 843

Senate Committee on Health

April 11, 2012 10:00 a.m.

Hawai'i State Legislature, Room 016

To: Honorable Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair
Honorable Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice-Chair
Honorable Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee Members: Sen. Mike Gabbard,
Sen. Les Ihara, Sen. Sam Slom

From: Charlene Cuaresma, Past President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

Measure Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MELBA BANTAY, for a term to expire 6-30-2016.

Dear Sen. Hee, Chair; Sen. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair; and Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee Members:

My name is Charlene Cuaresma. As past president of the Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, I strongly support the confirmation of Governor Abercrombie's nominee, Melba Bantay, to the Language Access Advisory Council. Since its inception in 1990, the Coalition has represented more than 50 Filipino community leaders, whose aims are to work for social justice issues and to empower Filipinos to make socially responsible contributions to Hawai'i and our global neighbors through education, advocacy, social action and service.

I have known Ms. Bantay for many years when we served as members of the Inter-Agency Council for Immigrants and Refugees. She mobilized key support for the passage of Hawai'i's Language Access Law, Act 290 as amended by Act 208. The Coalition is confident that Ms. Bantay's decades of expertise in immigrant services informs her of the importance of language access to government services by people whose first language is not English. She is a dedicated, compassionate, and tenacious advocate for social justice. She is highly regarded for her knowledge of immigrant rights, civil rights, and . She is competent, organized, and will be an asset to the Council.

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

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma
Past President
Filipino Coalition for Solidarity



CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS

99-1325 Aiea Heights Drive, Aiea, Hawaii 96701

To: Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

From: Jane Clement, President

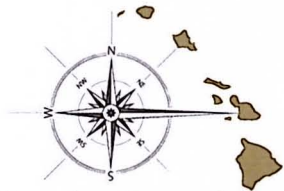
Date: April 11, 2012, 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 016

Re: Testimony on GM843 (Melba Bantay)

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of GM843 appointing Melba Bantay as member of the Language Access Advisory Council. My name is Jane Clement and I am the president of the Congress of Visayan Organizations (COVO), the umbrella of Visayan organizations in the state of Hawaii.

Melba Bantay has been with Catholic Charities Hawai'i since 1985. She is the Program Director of three of Catholic Charities' programs: Employment Core Services to Immigrants and Low-Income Persons, Immigration, and Refugee Services. Melba is accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals since 1994 to represent immigration clients before the USCIS. She earned her B.A. in Commerce from Far Eastern University in Manila, an M.A. in Religious Studies from Maryknoll School of Theology in New York, and a Masters in Public Health from the University of Hawaii.

Ms. Bantay is an active member of the Interagency Council on Immigrants and brings a lot of knowledge and experience about the immigrant community, as well as commitment, to the Language Access Advisory Council. We urge the committee to confirm her appointment.



MigrationCounsel.com

April 9, 2012

Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Re: Testimony on GM 843
In support of Gubernatorial Nomination of Melba Bantay to the
Language Access Advisory Council

Chairman Hee, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Honorable members:

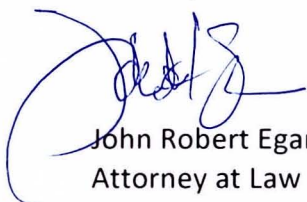
My name is John Robert Egan, and I am an attorney in private practice here in Honolulu. My law practice focuses primarily in the area of Immigration and Nationality Law. In the course of many years' involvement with that field, I have come to know your nominee, Melba Bantay, in her capacity as Director of Catholic Charities Hawai'i Immigration and Employment Services, as well as through her involvement in many related social service activities.

I can say that I have been able to observe her thoughtful work on many initiatives and in many contexts over these years. I believe that she will be diligent in her work and bring an unparalleled fund of experience and knowledge to the table. She is certain to be a positive contributor to Council's work.

I wish to express my unreserved support for the nomination of Melba Bantay to this position.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any further information.

Mahalo,



John Robert Egan
Attorney at Law



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: bramosrazon@aol.com

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM 843
Senate Committee on Health
April 11, 2012, 10:00 a.m.
Hawai'i State Legislature, Room 016

To: Honorable Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair
Honorable Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice-Chair
Honorable Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee Members: Sen. Mike Gabbard,
Sen. Les Ihara, Sen. Sam Slom

From: Beatrice Ramos-Razon, President, NAMI, Nursing Advocates and Mentors Inc.

Measure Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MELBA BANTAY, for a term to expire 6-30-2016.

Dear Sen. Hee, Chair; Sen. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair; and Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee Members:

My name is Beatrice Ramos-Razon. As the Founder and President of NAMI (Nursing Advocates & Mentors, Inc.), I am proud to submit our strong support for the gubernatorial nomination of Ms. Melba Bantay to the Language Access Advisory Council.

NAMI's membership is comprised of over 75 volunteer nurses, instructors, allied health care professionals, and Filipino leaders, who are dedicated to improve the health of Hawai'i's people.

As nurses, we are concerned about education and health disparities, quality and affordable health care for everyone, especially the poor; job security, labor equity, and more. Underlying all of these is language access for English language learners who struggle to navigate our complex and fragmented government offices. We believe that Ms. Bantay will bring a voice and conscience of reason to the Council with her years of problem solving hardship situations for those seeking immigrant services.fff

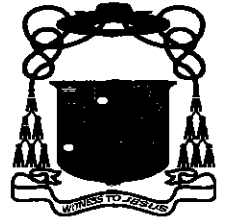
Thank you for holding this confirmation hearing and for the opportunity to support Gov. Neil Abercrombie's nominee, Ms. Melba Bantay.

Sincerely,

Beatrice Ramos-Razon, RN, FACDONA

President, Nursing Advocates and Mentors, Inc.

Diocese of Honolulu • Office of the Vicar General • www.catholichawaii.org
1184 Bishop Street, Honolulu, HI 96813-2859 • 808.585.3330 • gsecor@rcchawaii.org



April 5, 2012

Dear Chairman Hee and members of the Committee:

I am very happy to encourage your support and confirmation of the nomination of Ms. Melba Bantay to the Language Access Advisory Council. I have worked closely with Ms. Bantay over the years and am aware of her excellent advocacy work and service to immigrants in Hawaii. She has much knowledge and experience in this area. She works well with others and will be a valuable addition to this Council. I encourage you to give her nomination every consideration.

If I can provide any further information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. L. Secor".

Very Rev. Gary L. Secor
Vicar General

April 7, 2012

Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Testimony in Support of MELBA BANTAY'S appointment
Language Access Advisory Council

It is my privilege to highly recommend Ms. Melba Bantay to be appointed to Hawaii's Language Access and Advisory Council for a term through June 30, 2016. I have worked closely with Melba for the past two (2) years on the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigration Reform which advocates for immigrant rights and opportunities. I have found her to be sensitive, insightful, realistic and resourceful. Her wide community, statewide and national contacts will be extremely valuable to the work of this Advisory Council.

Melba's background experience has equipped her to bring wisdom and strategy to the work of the Language Access Council:

- multi-lingual fluency (Tagalog, English, Spanish)
- position with Catholic Charities Hawai'i as Director of Immigration and Employment Services providing employment and immigration services to low-income immigrants and refugees,
- accreditation by the Board of Immigration Appeals (DOJ) to represent immigration clients before USCIS,
- diverse educational background.

I strongly recommend confirmation of her appointment to the state Language Access Advisory Council.

Yours truly,

The Rev. Stanley Bain, FACE Organizer
Co-ordinator Hawai'i Coalition for Immigration Reform

TO: Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

FROM: Sister Rosalinda Barrozo, M.M.
1822 Keeaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822

DATE: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 (10:00 a.m., Room 016)

RE: GM 843 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MELBA BANTAY, for a term to expire 6-30-2016

I am a Maryknoll Sister, as well as an employee of Catholic Charities Hawaii for 18 years. **I strongly support the nomination of Melba Bantay for the Language Access Advisory Council.**

I have known Melba for over twenty years as a friend and she has been my supervisor and colleague while I have worked for Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Melba has been a committed advocate for immigrants, especially for the poor and vulnerable members of society. She is a U.S. citizen & employee of Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH). She is accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals of the U.S. Dept. of Justice which makes her a strong case manager for the immigration issues and concerns of her clients. She contributed much to the success of cases with the refugees when she was designated as the Director of CCH's Refugee Resettlement and Placement Program in the 1990's, at a time when we had an influx of Vietnamese refugees in Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii, and our society in general, is lucky to have her expertise in three languages (Tagalog, English & Spanish) and she is also knowledgeable of the cultures of the people she serves. She is an active member of the Hawaii Coalition for Immigration Reform and the Inter-agency Council for Immigrants and Refugee Service Providers that worked for the passage of the Language Access Law. She does pastoral ministry, especially at St. Theresa Co-Cathedral (Kalihi). She was the former President of their Pastoral Council, and has been a volunteer for 9 years in the Diocese's prison ministry program.

Melba has been actively involved in rallies for justice issues collaborating with different groups. She's a member of the PHOCUSED Collective Impact Poor /Unemployed Work Group.

I strongly recommend that the State Senate approve Governor Abercrombie's nomination of Melba Bantay to serve on the Language Access Advisory Board Council. She will be a great asset to the Advisory Board Council and for the welfare of the State of Hawaii. Thank you.



UNITED FILIPINO COUNCIL OF HAWAII

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

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM 843

Senate Committee on Health

April 11, 2012 10:00 a.m.

Hawai'i State Legislature, Room 016

To: Honorable Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair
Honorable Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice-Chair
Honorable Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee Members: Sen. Mike Gabbard, Sen. Les Ihara, Sen. Sam Slom

From: Lynne Gutierrez, President, United Filipino Council of Hawaii

Measure Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MELBA BANTAY, for a term to expire 6-30-2016.

Dear Sen. Hee, Chair; Sen. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair; and Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee Members:

UFCH submits this testimony to strongly support Governor Neil Abercrombie's nomination of Melba Bantay. My name is Lynne Gutierrez. I am the president of the United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH). We are an umbrella organization with member civic groups from six island councils. UFCH membership is comprised of nearly 5,000 individual members.

Based on her decades of immigrant services experience, and advocacy work for marginalized groups and vulnerable individuals, our Filipino community has tremendous confidence and trust in Melba Bantay's ability to guide the work of supporting our government agencies to provide language access to their services. Ms. Bantay is highly regarded for her character in words and deeds, her professionalism, thoroughness, persistence, and skilled stewardship of limited resources. UFCH is grateful for her dedication to public service in this position.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our strong support for Ms. Bantay and for holding this important confirmation hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Gutierrez, President, United Filipino Council of Hawaii



HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

6301 Pali Highway
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224

Email: IDLTestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov
Hearing on: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 @ 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room: 016

DATE: April 4, 2012

TO: **Senate Committee on Judiciary & Labor**
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

From: Walter Yoshimitsu, Executive Director

Re: Strong Support for GM 843 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **MELBA BANTAY**, for a term to expire 6-30-2016

Honorable Chairs and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary & Labor, I am Walter Yoshimitsu, **representing the Hawaii Catholic Conference**. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii, which under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents Roman Catholics in Hawaii.

We strongly support the confirmation of Melba Bantay to the Language Access Advisory Council. We truly believe that her excellent background (both personal and professional) will prove to be a great asset to this commission. Her educational background (M.A. in Public Health from U.H. and M. A. in Theology from Maryknoll, School of Theology, Maryknoll, NY) has provided a great foundation for her interest in serving on this commission.

There are several community roles that will directly ensure her active participation on the commission. She is the current Program Director for the Immigration and Refugee Services at Catholic Charities Hawaii. In addition, for more than 20 years, she was also the Director of Catholic Charities Hawai'i Immigration and Employment Services program that provided employment and immigration services to low-income immigrants and refugees. These roles alone uniquely qualify her to bring a reasoned and seasoned approach to any and all discussions regarding the needs of immigrants.

Since 1994, Melba has maintained her accreditation by the U.S. Department of Justice Board of Immigration Appeals to represent immigration clients before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. Other conducive roles and responsibilities have included; her position as Director of CCH Refugee Resettlement and Placement Program (one of only two Voluntary Agencies providing services to refugees resettling in the State of Hawaii); member of the Inter-agency Council for Immigrants and Refugee Service Providers (that worked for the passage of the Language Access Law); member of the Hawaii Coalition for Immigration Reform; member of PHOCUSED Collective Impact's Working Poor/Unemployed Work Group; and finally, council member of the new Hawai'i Healthcare Transformation Initiative.

On a more personal note, I have personally worked with Melba in her position at Catholic Charities for several years and am confident that her appointment will be of great value to the commission. She is trilingual, as she speaks fluent Tagalog, English and Spanish. She is currently an active member of St. Theresa Co-Cathedral and has worked in the diocese in several venues that directly impacts the overall community in a positive and constructive way.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

TO: Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

FROM: Linda Spencer
202 Waianuenue Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720

DATE: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 (10:00 a.m., Room 016)

RE: GM 843 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MELBA BANTAY, for a term to expire 6-30-2016

I would like to express strong support for the nomination of Melba Bantay to the Language Access Advisory Council.

I have known Melba Bantay for more than twenty years; working with her in the Catholic Charities Immigrant Services Program. My employment before Catholic Charities Hawaii did not deal with immigrants and I was introduced to the immigrant population and their needs by Melba. She has always been a mentor and teacher, using compassionate understanding for all who come to Catholic Charities for assistance.

Melba lives the mission of our organization and treats everyone with dignity, truly caring and understanding what they are going through. Being an immigrant herself, she can relate to some of the difficulties of living in a new country with different cultures and languages. She has studied and worked hard at being one of the best immigrant and refugee counselors in Hawaii. She speaks Tagalog and Spanish and is totally fluent in English, although it is not her first language. She has the innate ability to converse and reach immigrants who do not speak one of the languages she understands. She is able to do this because she is a good listener, answers only after she understands the situation, and gives truthful advice and direction.

Her goal of Social Justice for everyone never waivers. She has made sure that those who have been abused and neglected have the opportunity to be heard and the ability to learn and move ahead in their new communities. She understands that language and culture are the two most dominant barriers for newcomers. As a result she has always stressed continued education of English and Acculturation to the communities where they are now living.

There is no one I know who is better suited to serve on the Language Access Advisory Council. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.