

Inter-Agency Council for Immigrant and Refugee Services

c/o Susannah Wesley Community Center
1117 Kaili Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819

L A T E

February 9, 2012

TO: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair and Members of the Committee on Health, and

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

FROM: Dominic Inocelda, President, Inter-Agency Council for Immigrant and Refugee Services and Its Members

RE: TESTIMONY: In Strong Support of HB 2374, Relating to Language Access

I and the members of the Inter-Agency Council for Immigrant and Refugee Services would like to ask for your support to pass HB 2374, which would transfer the Office of Language Access from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of Health as an administratively attached agency.

The Inter-Agency Council has been a strong supporter of language access for Hawaii residents and visitors who speak little or no English. The organization was one of the key partners in the passage of the law which created the Office of Language Access. As such, we have a deep interest in the ability of the office to fulfill its purpose "to affirmatively address, on account of national origin, the language access needs of limited English proficient persons".

At this current time and circumstances we feel that a transfer of the Office of Language Access from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of Health would better serve the purpose of the office. The Department of Health has had a long history of service to the limited English speaking population and has a current focus on ensuring that health related concerns address all of Hawaii's people. The coverage of health concerns includes a broad spectrum of a person's life and therefore the Office of Language Access could have a broader impact on the State's ability to ensure language access. We have a general consensus that the offices' placement within the Department of Health would provide OLA with a broader base of support that would strengthen its ability to successfully fulfill its mission and to achieve its goals.

Again we ask for your support in the passage of HB 2374. We thank you for listening and providing an opportunity to voice our support of HB 2374.

L A T E

Office of Language Access Advisory Council

830 Punchbowl Street, #322
Honolulu, Hawaii 967813

February 9, 2012

TO: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair and members of the House
Committee on Health, and

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair and members of the House
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

FROM: Dominic Inocelda, Chair and members of the Office of Language Access
Advisory Council

RE: **Support of HB 2374**, To Transfer the Office of Language Access from
the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of
Health

In 2006, the legislature passed and the Governor signed the Language Access Law which created the Office of Language Access (OLA). This law ensures that limited English speaking persons have equal access to state-funded services in Hawaii. The law also created an advisory council to advise and support the work of the office.

The advisory council has reviewed and discussed the current status of the Office of Language Access and has concluded that it would be in the best interest of the office to transfer from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of Health. It is felt that at the current time the Department of Health would provide a broad base of support and alignment of goals relating to strengthening language access initiatives for limited and non-English speakers in the State. As we have a commitment to support the success and ability of the office to fulfill its function, the advisory council would like to request your support for the passage of HB 2374.

On behalf of the advisory council I would like to express our appreciation for your review and thoughtful consideration for the passage of HB 2374.

Listed below are the current advisory council members and their affiliations:

Advisory Council Members / Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>	
Uriarte, Edelene	Limited English Population	
Thein, Tin Myaing Dr.	Bilingual Referring Agency- Pacific Gateway Center	
Brow, Anh "Betty"	Oahu Representative	
Mabanglo, Ruth Dr.	U.H. Dept. of Language	
Asuncion, Lito M.	Hawaii County Representative	
Melba Bantay	Covered Entity	
Inocelda, Dominic	Advocacy Organization	
Ohta, Gerald	State Government	
Santa Maria, Mary F. MS, MPH	Maui County Representative	
Boido, Marcella Alohalani	Interpreter Organization	
Dotson, Jennifer L.	Bilingual Case Management	
Rawlins, Namaka Dr.	Hawaiian Language Organization	
Turturici, Azi	Kauai Representative	
Pagano, Kristine K.H.	DCAB	Ex-officio
Hoshijo, William	Civil Rights Commission	Ex-officio

Hawaii Interpreter Action Network

P. O. Box 236024

Honolulu, Hawaii 96823-3519

L A T E

TO: Rep. Ryan Yamane, Chair; Members of the Committee on Health
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair;
Members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employment

FROM: M. Alohalani Boido, M. A., President, Hawaii Interpreter Action Network
Hawaii Judiciary Certified Court Interpreter (Tier 4)
Tel.: 946-2558, E-mail: boido@hawaii.edu

HEARING: February 10, 2012, 10:45 a.m., Conf. Rm. 329

RE: **SUPPORT, HB 2374**, Relating to Language Access

Rep. Yamane, Rep. Rhoads, and all members of these two Committees: thank you for hearing this bill and considering this testimony.

I am Marcella Alohalani Boido, M. A., a Hawaii Judiciary Certified court interpreter (Spanish & English), a founding member of Hawaii Interpreter Action Network (HIAN), and currently the HIAN President. HIAN is dedicated to representing Hawaii's court and other interpreters and translators. We work to elevate professional standards of competence and ethics, and to improve working conditions.

Interpreters, translators, and bilingual workers are crucial to providing language access to Hawaii's large Limited-English Proficient population. Without us, there is no language access.

As an individual, I was involved in supporting the legislation creating the Office on Language Access (OLA) from the first time a bill was introduced in the Legislature. Currently I sit as a member of the Language Access Advisory Council. In that role, I have participated in the discussion about where to place OLA.

OLA is one of several agencies whose function was not envisioned when our Constitution was drafted. The discussion about where to locate OLA within our governmental structure has been going on for a long time. HIAN is therefore interested in seeing OLA placed in a setting that is congenial to its function and that is a good fit with its mission and the mission of the department where OLA will eventually be housed.

HIAN is satisfied that moving OLA to the Department of Health is a good move.

Please support HB 2374. Thank you.