

Filipinos for Affirmative Action

3432 B-1 Kalihi Street· Honolulu. HI 96819

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM 571

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

April 10, 2013, 10:00am

Hawai`i State Legislature

Hawai`i State Capitol, Conference Room 016

Measure Title:

Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council
Gubernatorial Nominee, LITO ASUNCION,
for a term to expire 6-30-2016.

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 Jr, Sen. Sam Slom

From: Agnes Malate, MEd, Filipinos for Affirmative Action
P.O. Box 61068; Honolulu, HI 96839 * armalate@yahoo.com; (808) 388-3019

My name is Agnes Malate and I'm a member of the Filipinos for Affirmative Action. I wholeheartedly **support** Lito Asuncion's re-appointment to the Advisory Council for the Office of Language Access. Mr. Asuncion is a long time advocate for immigrants and is committed to ensuring equal access to health and social services for all of Hawai`i's people. Having immigrated to Hawai`i from the Philippines, he has a keen understanding and appreciation for the challenges faced by those whose English is not their first language.

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, that was first established in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first Filipino contract laborers to Hawai`i. Upon graduation from UH-Manoa, I moved to Hilo where Mr. Asuncion had relocated with his family. We worked with UH-Hilo and community leaders to address issues concerning first-generation Filipino college students, including organizing the first Filipino student group at the university. 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 hardships that immigrants face, 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.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony, and I hope you will give Mr. Asuncion's nomination your full consideration.

United Filipino Council of Hawaii

P.O. Box 2878 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96802

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Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

April 10, 2013, 10 a.m. | Hawai'i State Legislature | Room 016

To: Honorable Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair
Honorable Sen. Maile S. L. Shimabukuru, Vice Chair
Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor:
Sen. Mike Gabbard, Sen. Les Ihara, Jr.; Sen. Sam Slom

From: Jenny Quezon, President, United Filipino Council of Hawaii

Dear Sen. Hee, Sen. Shimabukuru, Sen. Ihara, Sen. Gabbard, and Sen. Slom:

My name is Jenny Quezon, president of United Filipino Council of Hawaii, an umbrella organization with member organizations from six islands. UFCH membership is comprised of nearly 5,000 individual members.

UFCH strongly supports Governor Neil Abercrombie's nominee, Lito Asuncion, to serve on the Office of Language Access Advisory Council. I have known Mr. Asuncion for over 30 years. As president of the Big Island Filipino Community Council for multiple terms, Mr. Asuncion has represented the needs of Filipino communities under our UFCH statewide umbrella effectively. He works well with others, is impartial, and understands how government works through his endeavors in the public and private sectors as an educator, human service provider, and entrepreneur. Having overcome many adversities as an immigrant and naturalized citizen himself, Mr. Asuncion took his lessons learned and dreams for a better life to co-found Sariling Gawa, a camp for emerging Filipino youth leaders throughout the state. As a result, Mr. Asuncion has contributed to uplifting the status of Filipinos in Hawaii to become knowledgeable of their cultural and historical heritage in order to participate fully in our civil society.

Because of this, Mr. Asuncion brings a capacity building and hopeful perspective that will be a constructive force to aiding government agencies to ensure access to services through the role and function of the Office of Language Access. Thank you for the opportunity to provide strong support for Mr. Asuncion's nomination.

Sincerely,

Jenny Quezon
UFCH President



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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, LITO ASUNCION, for a term to expire 6-30-2016.

Dear Sen. Hee, Sen. Shimabukuro, 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 Neil Abercrombie's nominee, Lito Asuncion, to the Office of 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 Mr. Asuncion for over 40 years, starting as a fellow volunteer with the University of Hawai'i Operation Manong, a tutorial program for immigrant students in public schools. He also served as a commissioner with the Filipino Centennial Commission in 2006, representing the island of Hawai'i. Mr. Asuncion is a tireless and passionate advocate for immigrants and other vulnerable communities for decades, most notably as president of the Big Island Filipino Community Council. The Coalition believes that his knowledge as an educator, as a naturalized citizen, as a business person, as a human service provider for Hawaii County, as a parent, as well as his perspective of rural and neighbor island issues are invaluable. These will inform his deliberations and contribute to the Office of Language Access Advisory Council's charge to provide capacity building guidance to government agencies for language access to services and government processes that will enable English language learners the ability to become strong, informed, responsible, and contributing members of Hawai'i's civil society and vital economy.

Thank you for hearing this bill and for the opportunity to provide our strong support for Mr. Asuncion's confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council.

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma
Past President
Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

Filipino American Citizens League

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

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To: Honorable Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair
Honorable Sen. Maile S. L. Shimabukuru, Vice Chair
Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor:
Sen. Mike Gabbard, Sen. Les Ihara, Jr.; Sen. Sam Slom

From: Jake Manegdeg, President, Filipino American Citizens League

Measure Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Civil Rights Commission gubernatorial nominee, LITO ASUNCION, for a term to expire 6-30-2016.

Dear Sen. Hee, Sen. Shimabukuru, Sen. Ihara, Sen. Gabbard, and Sen. Slom:

My name is Jake Manegdeg. As president of the Filipino American Citizens League, I am very proud to strongly support the confirmation of gubernatorial nominee Lito Asuncion's confirmation to the Office of Language Access Advisory Council for a term to expire 6-30-2016. The 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 have known Mr. Asuncion for over 45 years through our volunteer work in social justice, civic, and cultural events in the Filipino community. We served as commissioners for the 2006 Filipino Centennial Celebration Commission. Mr. Asuncion is a highly regarded community leader, educator, entrepreneur, and advocate. His experiences of overcoming adversity as an immigrant to Hawai'i enlighten his years of community building to address institutional racism and ensure equal opportunities for families and individuals whose first language is not English. Mr. Asuncion is also a founder of Sariling Gawa, an annual, statewide leadership training program that instills cultural pride for Filipino youth. Given this, Mr. Asuncion will serve as a good steward for all of Hawai'i's people on the Office of Language Access Advisory Council.

Thank you for hearing this measure. Your positive consideration of Mr. Asuncion's confirmation is greatly appreciated.

Very Sincerely,

Jake Manegdeg
President, Filipino American Citizens League

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To: Honorable Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair
Honorable Sen. Maile S. L. Shimabukuru, Vice Chair
Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor: Sen. Mike Gabbard, Sen. Les Ihara, Jr.; Sen. Sam Slom

From: Jean Jeremiah, Private Citizen
c/o 860 Halekauwila Street #2506
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Sen. Clayton Hee, Sen. Maile Shimabukuru, Sen. Les Ihara, Sen. Mike Gabbard, and Sen. Sam Slom:

My name is Jean Jeremiah. As a private citizen, I am proud to provide strong support for Lito Asuncion's confirmation as Governor Neil Abercrombie's nominee to the Office of Language Access Advisory Council for a term to expire 6-30-2016.

I know Mr. Asuncion through serving with him to support the civic and cultural activities of our member Filipino organizations under the United Filipino Council of Hawaii for over ten years, including during my current term as president of the Oahu Filipino Community Council. He is a valued community leader, whose resourcefulness and fairness has helped many struggling families and individuals overcome adversities through human service programs he administered, as an educator, and as a proprietor of a small business.

I am confident that his excellent communication skills, critical thinking, knowledge of the role, function, and operations of government agencies, and ability to work well with officials in public and private sectors will be assets to providing greater access and accountability to help make Hawaii a model for providing language access to government services.

Thank you for the opportunity to support Mr. Lito Asuncion's nomination to the Office of Language Access Advisory Council.

Sincerely,

Jean Jeremiah