



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS
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HONOLULU, HI 96813

SERAFIN P. COLMENARES, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To: Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Serafin Colmenares Jr.
Executive Director, Office of Language Access

Date: March 28, 2014, 9:35 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

Re: Testimony on H.B. 1740 HD1 SD1
Relating to Language Access



The Office of Language Access (“OLA”) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1740 HD1 SD1 Relating to Language Access. My name is Serafin Colmenares, Jr. and I am the Executive Director of OLA. **OLA strongly supports H.B. 1740 HD1 SD1.** The appropriations inserted by the Senate Committee on Human Services reflect what is needed to operate the Language Access Resource Center (LARC) and Multilingual Website Pilot Project.

The Language Access Resource Center and a pilot multi-lingual website project were created by the legislature last year through Act 217. These are arms of OLA which enable state and state-funded agencies to better serve the LEP population and assist them in complying with applicable federal and state language access laws.

Since Act 217 became effective on July 1, 2013, OLA has set into motion the steps to hire staff and begin the work of the LARC and the Multilingual Website Pilot Project. However, OLA is unable to execute these initiatives as intended because the appropriation given by the 2013 legislature was less than half that was projected and requested.

We respectfully request that your committee pass this measure as is, with appropriations of **\$300,000 in Section 6** to operate the Language Access Resource Center; and **\$150,000 in Section 7** for the Multilingual Website Pilot Project.

OLA appreciates this committee for its commitment to language access and for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

To: Sen. David Y. Ige, Chair; Sen. Michelle N. Kidani, Vice-Chair;
All members, Senate Com. on Ways & Means

FROM: M. Alohalani Boido, M. A., Certified Court Interpreter;
Chair, Legislative Action Committee, Hawaii Interpreter Action Network
Affiliate, Pacific Media Workers Guild, Local 39521

HEARING: March 28, 2014; 9:35 a.m., Rm. 211

RE: **SUPPORT, HB 1740, HD 1, SD 1, Relating to language access**

Chair, Vice-chair, and all members of this Committee, thank you for hearing this bill. I am Marcella Alohalani Boido, a certified Spanish/English court interpreter and a founding member of Hawaii Interpreter Action Network (HIAN), an affiliate of the Pacific Media Workers Guild, Local 39521. We represent the interests of Hawaii's professional interpreters and translators. We are also deeply concerned with issues related to language access. We are the people who provide language access. We are also often painfully aware of the various ways in which language access is not available.

HB 1740 addresses multiple issues, several of which have repeatedly appeared in different bills brought before this legislature for at least 20 years: the Language Access Resource Center, and as part of that in its latest form, a vetted on-line list of interpreters and translators. (The vetting criteria have not yet been decided upon, and it is doubtful that they will be until there is funding for the list.) That the Hawaii State Office on Language Access (OLA) should have a multi-lingual web site in order to provide language access seems obvious. How can Limited-English Proficient residents and tourists access the OLA web site when there is no on-line text except in English?

If the Legislature does not fund these issues this year, they will re-appear next year—and the year after—and so on. **The problems driving this bill will not go away on their own.** In reality, with regard to this bill, the main questions facing our community and this committee are: a) whether or not more research and thinking time is needed in order to refine this bill in order to better solve our problems, and b) where to place priorities in overall state funding.

Respectfully, we ask you to please support HB 1740. Thank you.