



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS
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SERAFIN P. COLMENARES, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To: Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health

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

Date: January 24, 2014, 9 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 329

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

The Office of Language Access (“OLA”) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1740 Relating to Language Access. My name is Serafin Colmenares, Jr. and I am the Executive Director of OLA. **OLA strongly supports H.B. 1740 with amendments** to include actual appropriation amounts to 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’s effectivity 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 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.