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To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection & Health

From: Helena Manzano  
Executive Director, Office of Language Access

Date: March 1, 2016

Re: Letter of Support for GM598 regarding the confirmation of **Agustina Takashy** to the **Language Access Advisory Council** to represent the limited English proficient population with an interest in the provision of oral language services

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My name is Helena Manzano, Executive Director of the Office of Language Access since February 2015. The Office of Language Access ("OLA") appreciates the opportunity to provide this letter of support for the confirmation of Agustina Takashy to the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC) to fill the seat of "one member from the limited English proficient population who has an interest in the provision of oral language services" pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 321C-7(5).

Ms. Takashy became acquainted with LAAC as a member of the council's 'permitted interaction group' (PIG) for planning OLA's 2015 Annual Conference on Language Access, which focused on Hawaii's Residents from the Compact of Free Association (COFA) states. She was instrumental in ensuring that the wishes, needs, insights, and talents from her community were adequately represented at our conference. It is through her dedication and involvement that influenced the council and office to encourage her to serve on the council.

Since then, "Tina," as everyone has come to know her, has been an active, contributing, and committed quasi-member. She has made great efforts to attend all of the conference planning and language access advisory council meetings. She has demonstrated keen vision,

skillful networking, tireless efforts, and strong abilities to listen, understand, and collaborate in measurable ways that have effectively advanced OLA goals.

Ms. Takashy is ideally suited for this role, as she works closely with some of Hawaii's most disenfranchised LEP communities – those from Micronesian nations. She is a trained and experienced interpreter and translator; has a diploma in Not-for-Profit management; a master's degree in Public Health; and is also an active consultant in Micronesian issues. Her professional experience is complemented by her familial and personal ties to the Micronesian community, from which stems her extremely valuable perspectives, representation, and feedback. Her vast experience with Hawaii's LEP public has instilled within her a deep appreciation of OLA's mission.

The purpose of OLA is to address the language access needs of limited English proficient persons (LEP) and ensure their meaningful access to services, programs, and activities offered by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state government, including departments, offices, commissions, boards, or other state-funded agencies. OLA provides oversight, central coordination, and technical assistance to state agencies in their implementation of language access obligations – a civil right under both state and federal law.

OLA appreciates this committee for its commitment to language access and for the opportunity to provide this letter of support.