

HAWAII FILIPINO LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

LATE

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Date: March 15, 2016

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

Re: Testimony on H.B. 2226 HD2- Relating to the Office of Language Access

The Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association (HFLA) appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of HB2226 HD2 relating to the Office of Language Access.

This bill would help ensure our state's compliance with civil rights laws by providing the funds to adequately staff and operate the Office of Language Access (OLA), as this has been a challenge since the office was stripped of the majority of its resources during the budget cuts and reduction-in-force during the financial crisis in 2009.

We are also excited about the new leadership at the helm of OLA and its concerted focus on civil rights compliance across all branches of government.

Among one of the purposes of the HFLA is to advocate for the interests of the Filipino community in Hawaii. A significant proportion of those with limited English proficiency in Hawaii are Filipino; and our membership would like to ensure that their access to government and government-funded services is not hindered by language.

Moreover, as attorneys, we think it is essential that our state is compliant with the civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on language ability due to national origin. We understand that failure to follow the law in this area may mean a reduction or removal of federal funds to services that are essential to Hawaii's Filipino community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this measure in support.

The purposes of the HFLA are: to promote participation in the legal community by Filipino lawyers; to represent and to advocate the interests of Filipino lawyers and their communities; to foster the exchange of ideas and information among and between HFLA members and other members of the legal profession, the Judiciary and the legal community; to encourage and promote the professional growth of the HFLA membership; to facilitate client referrals and to broaden professional opportunities for Filipino lawyers and law students.



LAATE

CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

FROM: Melba Bantay, Immigration Program Director

DATE: Tuesday, March 15, 2016 (9:00 a.m., Room 229)

RE: **HB 2226, HD2, Relating to the Office of Language Access**

Catholic Charities Hawai'i supports HB 2226, HD1, Relating to the Office of Language Access, to appropriate funds for 3 full-time equivalent permanent positions within the Office of Language Access. We respectfully request consideration of funding in the amount of \$200,000 for this purpose.

As a member of the OLA Advisory Board, I recognize the excellent and important work that OLA does to ensure that individuals with Limited English Proficiency are able to access information and resources.

This bill will add two full-time permanent researcher positions and one full-time permanent office assistant position so that the office may successfully carry out its important role in promoting language accessibility, improving the understanding of laws related to language access, responding to complaints about lack of language accessibility for limited English proficient individuals, and providing support for covered entitled with the development and implementation of language access plans.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2226, HD2.



Legislative Testimony

Date: March 14, 2016

From: Office of Language Access Advisory Council
Dominic Inocelda, Chairperson and OLA Advisory Council Members

SUBJECT: **Support of HB 2226, HD2 -Relating to the Office of Language Access**

Honorable Chair Rosalyn Baker and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

The Office of Language Access Advisory Council at its meeting on February 4, 2016, unanimously voted to support legislative request to appropriate funds to increase staffing for the Office of Language Access. As HB 2226, HD2 asks to appropriate funds for three full-time positions for the OLA office, the OLA Advisory Council writes in support of HB 2226, HD2.

The OLA Advisory Council is made up of members who represent various entities and organizations that have a special interest in promoting the purpose and goals of the Office of Language Access as referenced by Act 290, Session Laws of Hawaii 2006, and amended by Act 201, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012. This act seeks to ensure that limited English proficient individuals have meaningful access to state-provided and state funded services in Hawaii.

The Advisory Council is in full agreement with HB 2226, HD2, which seeks to increase the current staffing of the Office of Language Access with the addition of two full-time permanent researcher positions and one full-time permanent office assistant position. This staffing level would greatly promote the office's ability to carry out its duties and functions as originally designed.

Although current staffing which was severely reduced in the State's reduction of force in 2009, has maintained the work of promoting language accessibility by increasing the number of trained interpreters, improving the understanding of Hawaii's language access laws and rights of persons who speak little or no English, responding to complaints about limited language access supports, and increasing the number of covered entities that have developed and implemented language access plans, the full functions of the office have not been addressed or implemented. We are in full support of increased staffing to ensure that the OLA office can more effectively do its work to improve language access for all in Hawaii.

On behalf of the Office of Language Access Advisory Council, I want to restate our position of full support for HB 2226 HD2, and ask for your serious considering of support and passage in your committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony of support of HB 2226. HD2.

baker3 - James

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2016 7:41 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Cc: Dinocelda@susannahwesley.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2226 on Mar 15, 2016 09:00AM

HB2226

Submitted on: 3/14/2016

Testimony for CPH on Mar 15, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dominic Inocelda	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair and Members of the CPH Committee, I am writing as an individual who supports efforts to increase language access and communication with State programs and resources including those private and non-profit agencies who receive State funds to provide services to residents in Hawaii. The need to increase communication between government and residents especially those who speak little or no English is of key importance to ensure the involvement and participation of limited or non-English speakers in Hawaii. I ask for your consideration and passage of HB 2226, HD2 to increase the Office of Language's ability to address the goals and functions of the office as initially designed in the creation of the OLA office. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2226, HD2

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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baker3 - James

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2016 11:25 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Cc: hidina@msn.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2226 on Mar 15, 2016 09:00AM

HB2226

Submitted on: 3/14/2016

Testimony for CPH on Mar 15, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dina R Yoshimi	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Over the past three years, I have become very familiar with the exceptional work OLA undertakes to support the development of language access plans for State agencies, monitor compliance with State and federal civil rights laws regarding language access, and educate all sectors of the State -- legal and medical personnel, interpreters/translators, etc. -- regarding requirements for federal compliance and, most critically, updates on changes in best practices, which are constantly under review and revision by federal agencies. Through their Herculean efforts, this essential work has been carried out by the current staff of three employees -- three employees to supervise the civil rights compliance of an entire state, where one in four residents speaks a language other than English at home. These numbers don't add up in any language. Supporting this bill will make a difference statewide, both for those who work with and provide services to our multilingual population, and for those who depend on meaningful and effective language access plans, and well informed State workers, to provide critical services. Thank you for your careful consideration of and support for this most important bill.

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