



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
**OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS**

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**LATE**

To: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection & Health

From: Helena Manzano  
Executive Director, Office of Language Access

Date: March 10, 2017

Re: Letter of Support for GM516 regarding the confirmation of **Aphirak Bamrungruan** to the **Language Access Advisory Council** to represent the state government.

(9:30am Agenda – Conf. room 229)

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My name is Helena Manzano, Executive Director of the Office of Language Access. The Office of Language Access (“OLA”) appreciates the opportunity to provide this letter of support for the confirmation of Aphirak Bamrungruan to the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC) to fill the seat of “one representative from the state government” pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 321C-7(1).

Aphirak Bamrungruan has been actively involved with the OLA and LAAC in his capacity as the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Project Manager at the Department of Human Services (DHS). In this position, Mr. Bamrungruan has been responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of department-wide systems, programs, policies and procedures addressing the language needs of LEP individuals. His knowledge of a wide range of tools for improving service delivery to LEP individuals is invaluable. He has first-hand experience in working with interpreters and translator; a practical understanding and application of the State procurement process on language services; and the ability to trouble-shoot complex administrative challenges in implementing language access under limited resources.

As a licensed attorney who has practiced in immigration and family law, Mr. Bamrungruan is an ideal candidate to serve on the LAAC because of his civil rights experience and astute understanding of Hawaii's language access law (Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 321C) and its intersection with relevant federal law. Mr. Bamrungruan is also an immigrant who learned English as a second language. His personal background gives him a unique perspective on LEP issues and a genuine empathy for the struggles of LEP individuals trying to navigate government systems and institutions.

Over the years, Mr. Bamrungruan has been a regular in language access advisory council meetings; thus, his confirmation would be a natural extension of the contributions he has already made. He has been instrumental in assisting OLA with several policy decisions, outreach, and training activities. He has demonstrated keen vision, skillful networking, and strong abilities to listen, understand, and collaborate in measurable ways that are advancing OLA goals. Given his position at DHS, and as state agencies receiving federal funds must comply with federal language access laws, Mr. Bamrungruan will be immensely helpful in advising OLA on how to best assist state agencies in their compliance efforts on all levels.

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.

March 10, 2017

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker  
Chair, Senate Committee on  
Senate District 6  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 230  
Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE

RE: GM 516 - Mr. Aphirak Bamrungruan's Nomination to the Language Access Advisory Council

Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker,

I strongly support Mr. Bamrungruan's nomination to the Language Access Advisory Council. He has the experience, leadership and perspective that will help the council to complete its task set out in HRS 321C-6.

I have known Mr. Bamrungruan for several years and in getting to know him, I've learned that he is very passionate about language access and he has a big heart for public service.

Mr. Bamrungruan has extensive background in language access. He holds a law degree and has been an advocate for language access for most of his career with the state. Mr. Bamrungruan has been a trusted advisor for me when I developed a language access plan for my organization and I know he has done the same for many other state agencies and organizations. He truly cares about helping LEP's enjoy the same opportunities and rights as citizens who are proficient in English.

Sincerely,

Tony Benabese