

HR 96

URGING THE STATE TO
ADDRESS THE LACK OF
LANGUAGE IN SERVICES,
PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES
OFFERED BY STATE
GOVERNMENT FOR PERSONS
WITH LIMITED ENGLISH
PROCIENCY

HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE STATE TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN
SERVICES, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY STATE
GOVERNMENT FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.

1 WHEREAS, the State comprises people who speak many
2 languages; and

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4 WHEREAS, Hawaii is home to a large number of persons with
5 limited English proficiency who do not speak English as their
6 primary language and self-identify as having a limited ability
7 to read, write, speak, or understand English; and

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9 WHEREAS, for persons with limited English proficiency,
10 language can be a barrier to accessing important benefits or
11 services, understanding and exercising important rights,
12 complying with applicable responsibilities, or understanding
13 information; and

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15 WHEREAS, a significant number of elderly residents and
16 newcomers are less proficient in English and are challenged in
17 their daily tasks such as visiting the pharmacy, communicating
18 with a physician, and managing access to essential services,
19 including access to municipal water and electricity services;
20 and

21
22 WHEREAS, the State's workforce includes persons with
23 limited English proficiency who also face challenges because of
24 their inability to fully understand instructions for safe
25 workplace practices or requirements and information related to
26 the safe handling of toxic materials and legal disposal of
27 harmful waste, which puts them at significant physical risk; and

28
29 WHEREAS, children with limited English proficiency face
30 significant challenges in gaining meaningful access to and
31 participating in social, educational, and recreational



1 opportunities when they are restricted by the lack of available
2 bilingual caregivers, school counselors, teachers, coaches, and
3 other adults who contribute to the development of their health
4 and educational success; and

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6 WHEREAS, a significant percentage of visitors to the State
7 lack proficiency in English and, therefore, are at risk in
8 situations where they are unable to understand written or verbal
9 warnings about dangerous surf conditions, impending severe
10 weather, appropriate responses to emergency sirens or warnings,
11 and restrictions on interacting with wildlife, including
12 protected species; and

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14 WHEREAS, one of the underpinnings of our State is the Aloha
15 Spirit, which is codified in law, and it is with the Aloha
16 Spirit and good feelings that the people of Hawaii have toward
17 one another and others that the Legislature finds that ensuring
18 meaningful access to services, programs, and activities for all
19 persons is a State priority; now, therefore,

20
21 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
22 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
23 of 2018, that the State is urged to address the lack of language
24 support in services, programs, and activities offered by State
25 government for persons with limited English proficiency; and

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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State shall make it a
28 priority to:

- 29
30 (1) Remove obstacles to promoting the hiring of bilingual
31 and multilingual persons in the State's workforce;
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33 (2) Promote and support the use and study of languages
34 other than English;
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36 (3) Expand the functional and active use of languages
37 commonly spoken in the State by persons in the
38 workforce;
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40 (4) Recognize language skills as critical workforce skills
41 that are essential to the State, the state economy,



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and the health and well-being of the people of the State;

(5) Promote an environment of aloha where the use of languages other than English in any public setting is welcomed, valued, and recognized as essential to building relationships, social ties, and community bonds; and

(6) Promote workplace training, public service campaigns, and educational programs that address bias and discrimination with respect to using languages other than English in public; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu; Mayors of the Counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui; Executive Director of the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission; Executive Director of the Disability and Communication Access Board; and Executive Director of the Office of Language Access.

OFFERED BY:

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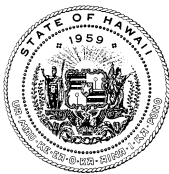
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HR 96

TESTIMONY



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 322
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 23, 2018

To: The Honorable Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair
The Honorable Daniel Holt, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

From: Aphirak Bamrungruan, Executive Director

Subject: **House Concurrent Resolution 108/ House Resolution 96** – Urging the State to address the lack of language support in services, programs, and activities offered by state government for persons with Limited English Proficiency.

Hearing: Tuesday, March 7, 2018, 10:00 AM
Conference Room 229, State Capitol

The Office of Language Access (OLA) supports the intent of the House Concurrent Resolution 108/ House Resolution 96 which urges the State to address the lack of language support in services, programs, and activities offered by state government for persons with Limited English Proficiency.

The mission of OLA is to address the language access needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons 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, and 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.

Hawaii is one of the most culturally diverse states and has one of the highest proportions of non-English speakers in the nation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, the total population in the State of Hawaii was 1,413,673. An estimate of 25.7% or 339,539 of Hawaii residents, 5 years and older, speak a language other than English at home. Of those, 166,949 or 12.6% indicated that they speak English “less than very well.”

English proficiency (or lack of) has strong impacts on people's economic and social activities, health literacy and wellness, access to education, employment, and important public assistance, benefits, programs and services. Biliteracy and multilingualism are becoming increasingly important aspects of our work force. A multilingual workforce that is knowledgeable about other cultures and can communicate in other languages is vital for our economic growth as well as the wellbeing of our diverse population.

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

Ryan H. Engle
Board President

Angela Kuo Min
Executive Director



**VOLUNTEER LEGAL
SERVICES HAWAII**

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 108/HR96
RELATING TO LANGUAGE SUPPORT**

**Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Tuesday, March 27 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 309**

CHAIR AARON LING JOHNSON, VICE CHAIR DANIEL HOLT, AND MEMBERS
OF THE COMMITTEE:

Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii supports HCR 108/HR96 in urging the state to address the lack of language support in services, programs, and activities offered by state government for persons with limited English proficiency.

In the last thirty-six years, Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii has provided legal assistance to the low- and moderate- income community of Hawaii; many who identify themselves as English not being their first language and/or being limited in English proficiency. Our office recognizes the needs for multilingual employees to continue serving the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural community of Hawaii, and to provide all residents of Hawaii meaningful access to justice.

I support HCR 108/96. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Angela Kuo Min
Executive Director



HR-96

Submitted on: 3/25/2018 12:54:42 PM

Testimony for LAB on 3/27/2018 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| david derauf | Kokua Kalihi Valley | Support | No |

Comments:

Aloha:

KKV serves the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual population of Kalihi. A majority of our patients speak a language other than English as their first language. Many speak no English at all.

Their ability to interact with our State government can be severely affected by the lack of language services. This is inefficient, ineffective and not in line with the concept of Kakou.

We support this measure.

HR-96

Submitted on: 3/25/2018 6:44:10 PM

Testimony for LAB on 3/27/2018 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Melodie Aduja | Oahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i | Support | No |

Comments:

To the Honorable Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair; the Honorable Daniel Holt, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee on Labor & Public Employment:

Good morning. My name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **HCR108** which urges THE STATE TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN SERVICES, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY STATE GOVERNMENT FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of **HCR108** and supports its passage.

HCR108 is in accord with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as the State is urged to address the lack of language support in services, programs, and activities offered by State government for persons with limited English proficiency.

The DPH Platform states that "We believe that our nation should have a fair immigration policy that recognizes the diversity of our country and the contribution that immigrants make and have made in the sciences, arts, and culture.

We oppose racial profiling, and encourage policies that avoid the militarization of our borders, and deplore policies that would deny education and health and human services to immigrant children. We need to ensure that immigrant children, whether their parents are documented or undocumented, are treated with fairness and respect in our schools and in our healthcare system. " (Platform of the DPH, P.5, Lines 225-226, 233-236 (2016)).

We believe that all families should have an equal opportunity to build their assets and become self-sufficient; and we support a strong safety net of programs that will afford them the opportunity to do so. We must protect our children, our future, from violence and neglect and provide them with a safe and healthy environment in which to grow and thrive. (Platform of the DPH, P.4, Lines 184-185 (2016))

We believe that workers need to be safe and free from any form of discrimination, harassment or abuse in the workplace. We seek legislation that will achieve these goals. (Platform of the DPH, P.3, Lines 131-132 (2016)).

We need to ensure that our students are safe in our schools, free from bullying and discrimination, to include but not limited to, disability, gender bias, weight, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and/or religion. (Platform of the DPH, P.6, Lines 321-323 (2016)).

Given that **HCR108** the State is urged to address the lack of language support in services, programs, and activities offered by State government for persons with limited English proficiency, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com, Text/Tel.: (808) 258-8889

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 309
March 27, 2018, 10am

Testimony in Strong Support of
HCR 108/HR 96 RELATING TO LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Submitted by Amy Agbayani, Chair
Filipina Advocacy Network (FAN)
3432 B-1 Kalihi St.
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822

Chair Johanson Vice Chair Daniel Holt and members of the committee.

Filipina Advocacy Network (FAN) strongly supports HCR 108/ HR 96 "URGING THE STATE TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN SERVICES, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY STATE GOVERNMENT FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY." These resolutions are consistent with FAN goals to improve the status of Filipinos in Hawai'i. FAN is committed to equal rights and non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion of all persons in our state. This resolution is an important recognition of the rich historical and current linguistic diversity of the state's population. This resolution provides excellent information about our state's support of all its residents, including the needs of our immigrant community and contributions of our multilingual workforce.

FAN sees this resolution as a recommitment to implementing civil rights laws on equal access and non-discrimination as well as improving relationships and services in our community and strengthening our economy. I respectfully request you approve this resolution with or without the following suggested and amendments:

ADD/INSERT BEFORE LAST PARAGRAPH "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED....

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state commends and supports the University of Hawaii's Hawai'i Language Road Map and language courses; the Department of Education's programs for English Language Learners, Seal of Biliteracy and Multilingualism for Equitable Education policies; the Office of Language Access, Disability and Communication Access Board, Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission, other government and private organizations that promote linguistic diversity as a cultural, civic and economic asset; and

ADD TO FINAL LAST PARAGRAHPH "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED....

Certified copies be transmitted to the President of the University of Hawai'i and the Superintendent of Education.

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 309
March 27, 2018, 10:00am

Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair
Rep. Daniel Holt, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Dina R. Yoshimi
98-2051 Kaahumanu Street
Aiea, HI 96701

Monday, March 26, 2018

In support of HR 96, HCR108

I am Dina Rudolph Yoshimi, a faculty member of the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa (UHM) for the past 26 years, and Director of the Hawai'i Language Roadmap Initiative (housed in the College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature at UHM) since September 2013. Today I am submitting testimony as a private citizen in support of HR96, HCR108.

In my role as a language professional, as well as someone with extensive experience living overseas, and as a long-time resident of this state, where opportunities to speak with residents and visitors alike in languages other than English are quite common, I am well aware of the urgent need for proficient speakers of languages in addition to English across virtually all sectors of the state workforce. I am not alone in this appreciation: In 2014, a bipartisan group of members of the U.S. Congress, including our own Senator Brian Schatz, commissioned a study on the language needs of our country. They provided the following rationale for the study:

“We write to request that the American Academy undertake a new study...to examine the nation's current capacity in languages, how a greater attention to language training can improve the education of the citizenry prepared to thrive in a multicultural society and a global economy, and how such preparation influences international cooperation and diplomacy, trade and foreign investment, national security, and the ability of all Americans to enjoy a rich and meaningful life.”

The Congressional group's commissioning letter goes on to state:

“English is no longer sufficient as a *lingua franca* – neither at home nor abroad. The percentage of the world's population that speaks English as a first language is declining rapidly; if current demographic trends continue, only 5% will be native English speakers by 2050. At the same time, the ability to communicate in languages other than English has never been more important...”

The commissioned study was conducted by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and published in spring of 2017 under the title *America's Languages: Investing in Language*

Education for the 21st Century. Among the Key Findings of the comprehensive report, the following were noted (and I quote):

- The ability to understand, speak, read, and write in world languages, in addition to English, is critical to success in business, research, and international relations in the twenty-first century.
- The United States needs more people to speak languages other than English in order to provide social and legal services for a changing population.
- The study of a second language has been linked to improved learning outcomes in other subjects, enhanced cognitive ability, and the development of empathy and effective interpretive skills...
- The United States lags behind most nations of the world, including European nations and China, in the percentage of its citizens who have some knowledge of a second language.
- One of the biggest obstacles to improved language learning is a national shortage of qualified teachers...

The report's Key Recommendations focused on capacity building for language learning through:

- a) improved training and hiring of foreign language teachers, as well as through creating innovative language learning programs both in school and in after school programs, and through delivery of language instruction using enhanced technological means and blended learning programs;
- b) developing initiatives directed towards heritage learners (those who speak a language other than English in the home), a natural strength in many parts of the country, including our own; and
- c) building public-private partnerships between schools, government, philanthropies, businesses, and local communities with the goal of enhancing and strengthening opportunities for language learning throughout the nation's education systems.

In sum, there is much work to be done in enhancing the state's capacity to draw on the considerable multilingual talent among our residents, and to enhance opportunities for developing language proficiency among public school students and public workers alike. From the classroom to the courts, from hospital corridors to housing services, and from jet-ways to hiking trails, there is not a workplace in the state that does not require the presence of employees who can extend a warm greeting and a clear explanation of legal guidelines, safety regulations, or application procedures in the language spoken by the resident or visitor with limited English proficiency. Yet our State agencies have no mechanism by which to hire bilingual employees who are able to provide equitable access to state services. Without a mandate for valuing bilingual workers, an expansion of job criteria for language-critical positions, and mechanisms for training and hiring those who are best able to increase access to services, we will continue to fail in our commitment to show aloha to those in need of language assistance. This resolution is the first small step in recognizing that we fail to serve with aloha when we fail to provide language access. I strongly urge you to adopt this resolution and use it as a springboard for further legislative action to remove the impediments that prevent the State of Hawai'i from fulfilling its responsibilities to those residents and visitors with limited English proficiency.

I thank you for your service to the State, and to all the people of Hawai'i, and for this opportunity to testify.

HR-96

Submitted on: 3/26/2018 11:01:51 AM

Testimony for LAB on 3/27/2018 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Patricia Halagao | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

I fully support HR96. It is important for our government to strongly assert the need for systemic support for our Limited English speaking/ multilingual populations in order for their bilingual skills to be valued and seen as assets for state jobs, as well as to also gain access to important services like in health, education, and the law. This resolution is an important step to recognizing Hawaii's strengths and positions us to take action in being a model multilingual society for our nation.

HR 96

**LATE
TESTIMONY**

LATE

LATE

HAWAII INTERPRETER ACTION NETWORK
P.O. Box 236024
Honolulu, Hawaii 96823-3519

hawaii.interpreters@gmail.com

To: Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair; Rep. Daniel Holt, Vice-Chair;
Members, House Committee on Labor & Public Employment

From: Marcella Alohalani Boido, M.A.
Hawaii State Judiciary Certified Spanish Court Interpreter, Tier 4
President, Hawaii Interpreter Action Network (HIAN)
Pacific Media Workers Guild, CWA Local 39521

Date: March 27, 10:00 a.m., Room 309

Re: **HCR 108, HR 96, SUPPORT**

Chair Johanson, Vice-Chair Holt, and Members of this Committee, thank you for hearing these resolutions. Respectfully, I ask all of you to support these resolutions. The testimony I am submitting on them is identical.

Hawaii Interpreter Action Network (HIAN), founded in 2002, is a non-profit professional association and union affiliated with the Pacific Media Workers Guild, CWA Local 39521.

It is the good fortune of HIAN's membership to speak more than one language. We wish the same good fortune for others, and hope that our government will take pride in our multilingual population, and support it. We also ask you to help and support those who are Limited-English Proficient, and provide them with the services that they need.

HIAN's members are among the people who make language access possible in Hawaii. We are very aware of the pukas in our governmental services in this regard. Please support language access in Hawaii.

Respectfully, we ask you to please pass HCR 108 and HR 96. Thank you.