



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

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To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health

From: Aphirak Bamrungruan
Executive Director, Office of Language Access

Date: 04/01/2021

Subject: **GM 650** - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MARIA CRISTINA ARSUAGA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

Hearing: Monday, April 5, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference

Agency's Position: The Office of Language Access (OLA) **supports** the nomination of Ms. Maria Cristina Arsuaga to the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC) to fill the seat of "one representative of a professional interpreter's organization," pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 321C-7(a)(8) for a term to expire June 30, 2025.

Purpose and Justification: The purpose is for the consideration and confirmation of the LAAC Gubernatorial Nominee, Ms. Maria Cristina Arsuaga.

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.

Ms. Arsuaga is a current member the National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT). She has more than 20 years of experience in the interpreting and translating profession and has been a federally certified Spanish interpreter since 2000. As a professional

translator/interpreter, Ms. Arsuaga has provided language services in numerous areas including, but not limited to, financial, medical, and legal settings.

Furthermore, since moving to Hawaii in 2016, Ms. Arsuaga has been actively involved with the local interpreting community and has experienced firsthand the challenges faced by the diverse LEP population in all areas of our society such as health, education, and social justice. These experiences have increased her awareness and respect for the struggles of LEP individuals, as well as for those who work with them.

Ms. Arsuaga has been serving on the LAAC since January 2018. As an active council member, she has provided valuable input and direction in advancing OLA goals and objectives. Her desire to continue serving on the LAAC reflects her passion and commitment to the issue of language access.

Therefore, OLA respectfully requests your favorable consideration in confirming the appointment of Ms. Maria Cristina Arsuaga to the LAAC.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to this committee.

TESTIMONY OF MARIA CRISTINA ARSUAGA
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
APRIL 5, 2021, 1:00 P.M. VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 650

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MARÍA CRISTINA ARSUAGA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and members of the Committee:

My name is María Cristina Arsuaga. I have been a federally certified Spanish interpreter since 2000, and a Master interpreter for the State of Hawai'i Judiciary since 2016. I am hereby seeking reappointment to the Language Access Advisory Council for the Office of Language Access in my role as a professional interpreter.

In the three years I have served on the Language Access Advisory Council I have learned so much about specific challenges faced by the diverse Limited English Proficient population of Hawai'i in all areas of our society, including health, education and justice.

I believe I can continue to effectively advise and help to the Office of Language Access as a representative of professional interpreters and translators and member of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators) by using my personal experience and professional expertise as an interpreter for 22 years, coupled with the knowledge I have gained in Hawai'i since moving here from New York City more than five years ago. More specifically, I hope to guide OLA on practical, technical and ethical matters involving the use of interpretation and written translations for LEP individuals. The best protection that can be afforded to an LEP person is equal access to the same information as an English-speaking person. Ensuring high-quality and accurate interpretation and translation of documents is paramount to this end.

I have been regularly attending and participating in the LAAC's meetings since my nomination by Governor Ige in January 2018. I hope to continue participating in Council meetings and providing meaningful and informed guidance to the Office of Language Access.

I look forward to continue working with my fellow Council members from state government and non-profit agencies to help the Office of Language Access fulfill its mission.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



María Cristina Arsuaga
Carsuaga1@icloud.com



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Hearing Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 at 1:00 PM
Via Video Conference

Senate Committee on Health

To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

From: Mark J. Hashem
Representative, District 18

Re: Testimony in **Strong Support** of GM 650 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MARIA CRISTINA ARSUAGA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

I met Cristina five and a half years ago through my wife, who is from Peru. The two of them bonded over their mutual first language and love of hiking. During these years, I have had the opportunity to frequently socialize with Cristina and her husband at our homes and other locations.

Cristina is a very responsible and organized person, who is always willing to help her friends. She is interesting and interested when engaging in conversation and is able to express her opinions and listen to others, even when she disagrees, in a respectful way.

If she is reappointed, I have no doubt whatsoever that her colleagues on the Language Access Advisory Council will benefit substantially from her presence, as will the rest of us in Hawai'i. Cristina's many professional accomplishments are but one facet of the multiple contributions she will make. Without any hesitation whatsoever, I urge you to select Cristina Arsuaga for the Language Access Advisory Council.

Representative Mark Jun Hashem
District 18: East Honolulu – Kahala to Hawaii Kai
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Barry D. Edwards,
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To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

By Electronic Testimony Filing

Barry D. Edwards

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March 30, 2021

Hearing Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 at 1:00 PM
Via Video Conference

Senate Committee on Health

To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

From: Barry D. Edwards, Lawyer

Re: *Testimony in Strong Support of GM 650 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MARIA CRISTINA ARSUAGA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.*

Dear Sirs:

I'm a lawyer who has practiced in Hawaii and on the mainland for over 45 years. Much of my work has involved assisting persons accused of state and federal crimes.

In my practice before the Hawaii federal court, I have often represented persons whose language is Spanish. That's how I know Maria Cristina Arsuaga.

Over the years, 34 in Hawaii, I have had occasion to work with many Spanish language interpreters. None have come close to the quality and professionalism that Ms. Arsuaga brings to her work. Whether in court, or translating written materials from Spanish to English, her help is always punctual and proper.

She has been accommodating when circumstances change the anticipated plan or schedule, and always is on time with whatever task is at hand.

Ms. Arsuaga will make a powerful addition to this organization.

Sincerely,

s/ Barry D. Edwards

Hearing Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 at 1:00 PM
Via Video Conference

Senate Committee on Health

To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

From: Dina R. Yoshimi, Ph.D.

Re: Testimony in **Strong Support** of GM 650 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MARIA CRISTINA ARSUAGA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

I am Dina Rudolph Yoshimi, Associate Professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Hawai‘i-Mānoa (UHM) for the past 28 years, and Director of the Hawai‘i Language Roadmap Initiative, an endeavor that takes special interest in the challenges of language access in Hawai‘i, since 2013. Today I am submitting testimony as a private citizen in strong and unqualified support of Maria Cristina Arsuaga’s consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC).

Christina brings invaluable talent, experience and perspective to her role on the Language Access Advisory Council. Her status as a Federally-certified Interpreter and a Master Interpreter in Hawai‘i is a pinnacle reached by very few professional interpreters, and reflects the exceptional ability she commands in her work with language in the service of justice and social well-being. Her work in these roles also ensures that she is highly knowledgeable about the practical aspects of interpreting and has a rich understanding of the critically important ethical concerns that are so poorly understood by many in state and local government, as well as by the public at-large. Crucially, through her professional engagement in top-tier venues, she contributes her understanding of up-to-date technical resources that can support and strengthen the state’s goals of providing equitable and fair language access to its extensive populations of residents with limited English proficiency.

I add to these outstanding credentials, Christina’s endeavors since her arrival in the state as a dedicated student of our local linguistic ecology, and of the network of government agencies and NGOs that endeavor to address the myriad demands of language access. Shortly after her arrival in the islands, Christina and I met to discuss the status of language access in the islands; it was clear that she appreciated the long history and complex social situations that contribute to Hawai‘i’s multilingual character. She indicated that she would take time to learn about local language access concerns in order to engage constructively with the concerns around interpreting, her domain of expertise. To her considerable credit, Christina has done just that. She has served for three years on the LAAC and is well-aware of the areas where language access in Hawai‘i can be served by the knowledge and experience she brings. We were delighted to have her as a highly valued participant in the Hawai‘i Language Roadmap’s last symposium in November 2019, where she joined a statewide cohort of representatives from state and local government, NGOs, and local businesses to address the needs of residents and visitors in our multilingual

Hawai'i. She provided insightful contributions to the group discussions, and collaborated energetically with representatives from all sectors of the state's workforce. This open-minded, well-informed and genuinely passionate commitment to pursuing social justice and community well-being through language access that reflects the highest professional standards in the field defines the contribution you can anticipate from Christina Arsuaga in her service to the LAAC.

I recommend Christina Maria Arsuaga to you with my highest and most enthusiastic support, and am honored to be able to present this testimony in her behalf.

all aspects current and developing trends, most especially in technical areas. Reports in the local news and stories we hear from our colleagues make us all too aware of the need for significant and meaningful improvement to language access in our state. Working to ensure that all residents, including those with limited English proficiency, benefit from the services and resources that State agencies and other NGOs provide. Christina's extensive experience with all aspects of interpreting are an essential asset for the position she currently holds, and has been nominated to fill again. Her work as a top-tier interpreter ensures that she is aware of current and developing trends, most especially in technical areas. , and most especially her wo

Has spent time in the state, already served a 3 year term well-versed in the local context and the demand for language access that these recent times have demonstrated all to well is a must-have for saving lives, a ensuring a secure domicile, and food security, not to mention navigating the inexorable challenges of obtaining support through various state, federal and non-governmental agencies.

A quiet wisdom, a powerful voice for what is right.

Participated in our most recent Roadmap Symposium, lending her voice and extensive experience to the gathering of public and private employers including representatives from C&C Honolulu, State Workforce Development agencies, and state educational entities.

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