



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: Apherak Bamrungruan  
Executive Director, Office of Language Access

Date: 04/01/2021

Subject: **GM 651** - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, TERRINA WONG, for a term to expire 06-30-2022.

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

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**Agency's Position:** The Office of Language Access (OLA) **supports** the nomination of Ms. Terrina Wong to the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC) to fill the seat of "One representative of a bilingual referral service or program," pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 321C-7(a)(9) 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. Terrina Wong.

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. Wong is currently employed as Interim Deputy Director and Director of Immigration Services at Pacific Gateway Center (PGC), an agency that empowers vulnerable populations within our community through social services, economic development, and education & training. In her position as Director of Immigration Services, Ms. Wong works daily with the foreign-born

clientele of PGC whose English is not their first language or having a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand the English language. Ms. Wong has first-hand knowledge of the obstacles these LEP individuals face as well as an awareness of the resources available to help them overcome those obstacles and achieve self-sufficiency through skill building and access to opportunities, while respecting cultural heritages.

Ms. Wong was given an interim appointment to the LAAC by former Governor Neil Abercrombie on July 1, 2014 and has been an active, contributing, and committed member since. I have work extensively with Ms. Wong and have personal knowledge of her capabilities. She is well qualified and possesses the knowledge, expertise, and background regarding the issues and challenges involved with LEP individuals. She is also well respected, and her expertise is recognized by the various organizations and community stakeholders.

Her desire to continue serving on the LAAC is a reflection of her passion and commitment to the issue of language access. Therefore, OLA respectfully requests your favorable consideration in confirming the appointment of Ms. Terrina Wong to the LAAC.

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

TESTIMONY OF TERRINA G. WONG

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

HEARING DATE: APRIL 5, 2021 at 1:00 pm via VideoConference

TO: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice-Chair

Re: Strong support of Governor's Message No. 651 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Terrina G. Wong, for a term to expire on June 30, 2022

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

My name is Terrina Wong and I have proudly served as an active and committed member of the Language Access Advisory Council since 2015 and was recently elected Chair of the Language Access Advisory Council in February 2021.

Being a member of the Language Access Advisory Council has deeply enriched my work at Pacific Gateway Center as Interim Deputy Director and Director of Immigration Services at Pacific Gateway Center. I realize that I have found my calling working with the uprooted, displaced and vulnerable in our community.

Being effective and successful in my work in providing social services to the immigrant and refugee populations means language access. It is the heartbeat of what matters most to the newcomers to our community; that is, language access means not only equity in opportunities and services, but also it is inherent in our state's most important values of aloha, treating others with respect, care and compassion, and a sense of belonging.

The Language Access Advisory Council allows me and my fellow council members to help the community and public agencies better understand the language access law in the state, provide training to state and federal agencies and interested community members on how to work meaningfully with the limited English proficient, and to mitigate barriers that impede access to benefits and services to which they are entitled.

I am keenly interested in growing our work in language access and my priorities would be to ensure access to services by building capacity in language access in the state, ensuring advocacy and equity at all levels, and developing ways to acquire data for effective decision-making. In this regard, I look forward to the opportunity for the Language Access Advisory Council in sharing the vision of the Executive Director of the Office of Language Access, Aphirak Bamrungruan, to work with community partners in upholding the rights of the limited English proficient in Hawai'i.

It would be an honor to continue my service and participation as a member of the Language Access Advisory Council. Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony.

DATE OF HEARING: April 5, 2021 at 1:00 PM

TO: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice-Chair

FROM: Catherine Chen and Liza Ryan Gill, Co-Chairs of the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)

RE: Testimony in Strong Support of GM 651 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Terrina Wong, for a term to expire 06-30-22

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Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice-Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee,

We write in strong support of GM 651, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Terrina Wong, for a term to expire 06-30-22. Terrina Wong is an active member of Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights and we have seen first hand her thoughtful, compassionate, and exceedingly competent leadership. She is a true asset to the Language Access Advisory Council and to Hawai'i.

Terrina has been an active leader of the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) since it was officially re-started in September 2020. HCIR is a coalition of immigrants, immigrant-led and -serving organizations, and allies united in advocacy and education for equal justice and community inclusion for immigrants. In September, we identified three major priorities for HCIR to work on, and language access was the top priority and greatest need. Terrina stepped up to volunteer to lead the language access sub-committee and thus formed the Language Access Ad Hoc Committee.

As leader of the Language Access Ad Hoc Committee within HCIR, Terrina coordinated biweekly meetings and thoughtfully planned how the group would meet our advocacy and education goals in an inclusive way. Members of the group included advocates and service providers, state government employees, and immigrant leaders. Terrina's passion for language access for all shone through in every meeting.

At HCIR, Terrina has been able to leverage her expertise as the current chair of the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC). When HCIR members have questions about language access rights or related issues, she has generously shared answers. When members have concerns, they also feel comfortable sharing these issues with Terrina. Terrina is always professional in her role and is extremely accessible to the community, which is an asset not only to HCIR but also to LAAC.

Through her role as the Interim Deputy Director and Director of Immigration Services at Pacific Gateway Center, she has tremendous experience in the world of language access and immigrant rights. She shares her expertise, participates fully in community, and daily interacts with immigrants, including limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals. HCIR members see her as a general community resource, coming to her with questions like where to access English classes or refugee services. Through her day-to-day work at Pacific Gateway Center, she intimately understands the needs of LEP individuals and immigrants.

Terrina is also a person of good moral character. She is kind to everyone and makes everyone feel included, an important skill in a good leader. She also tackles issue through a thoughtful, moral lens that prioritizes finding solutions in an inclusive and equitable way. Her moral character drives her passion for advocacy.

Terrina is a strong advocate for language access, equity issues, civil and immigrant rights. Overall, her experience, connections with the community, and character make her exceedingly well-placed to assist the Executive Director of the Office of Language Access by providing input on implementation and compliance with language access. HCIR and LAAC are both extremely lucky to have her.

Thank you,

Catherine Chen and Liza Ryan Gill, Co-Chairs of the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)

~~February 9, 2021~~ April 3, 2021

~~TO: \_\_\_\_\_~~ DATE OF HEARING: April 5, 2021 at 1:00 PM

TO: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice-Chair

FROM: Darrin Sato, Chair, InterAgency Council for Immigrant and Refugee Services  
And Chief Operations Officer, Kalihi Palama Health Center

RE: Testimony in Strong Support of GM 651 -- Submitting for consideration and confirmation  
to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Terrina Wong, for a term to  
expire 06-30-22.

The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair  
House Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness

~~FROM: \_\_\_\_\_~~

~~SUBJECT: Support of HB 728 RELATING TO STATEWIDE HEALTH PLANNING.~~

~~Hearing: \_\_\_\_\_~~ Thursday, February 11, 2021, 9:30 a.m.

~~My name is \_\_\_\_\_.~~ Darrin Sato. I am currently the Chief Operating Officer of Kalihi Palama  
Health Center with \_\_\_\_\_ and our agency is an active member of the InterAgency  
Council for Refugees and Immigrants (IAC). I currently Chair the IAC. The IAC

~~-I am submitting this comment writing,~~ on behalf of this agency which administers community  
programs that involve the need for meaningful language access to our limited-English proficient  
(LEP) community, in support of Terrina Wong to the Language Access Advisory Council. HB  
728 - Relating to Statewide Health Planning.

Ms. Wong serves as Co-Chair of the IAC representing Pacific Gateway Center, a community-  
based non profit that empowers immigrants, refugees, and the vulnerable populations towards  
self-sufficiency.

Ms. Wong is a fervent proponent of language access. She has demonstrated this passion and  
strong belief in this civil and immigrant right by taking leadership roles in the community that  
ensures meaningful communication to the limited-English proficient. She deeply believes that  
language access provides equity for these targeted populations to ensure they have access to  
public services and imperative communications related to their health, well-being and strong  
sense of belonging to the community.

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She is a person noted for her honesty, trustworthiness, reliability and compassion. Her proven skills in leadership and organization which she unwavering lends to the community for issues in support of immigrant rights and language access warrant her confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council.

Thank you for your consideration.