



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 652** - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, VALENTINA YAROVAYA, for a term to expire 06-30-2024.

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. Valentina Yarovaya to the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC) to fill the seat of "one member-at-large," pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 321C-7(a)(14) for a term to expire June 30, 2024.

Purpose and Justification: The purpose is for the consideration and confirmation of the LAAC Gubernatorial Nominee, Ms. Valentina Yarovaya.

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. Yarovaya is currently employed as a substitute teacher-mentor at the State of Hawaii Department of Education, a position she has held since her retirement, in July 2013. Prior to her retirement she was a Special Education Teacher at Stevenson Middle School, Honolulu, Hawaii,

where she taught total communication class for deaf and hard of hearing students as well as special education students.

Ms. Yarovaya is multilingual in Russian, English, and American Sign Language. She holds multiple advanced degrees including a Master of Science degree in Special Education and completed a Bilingual Advanced Certificate Program in Special Education. In addition, she has years of experience teaching children and adults with disability and promoting accessibility guidelines of the American with Disabilities Act. She also assisted access to programs and services for parents with limited English proficiency.

Ms. Yarovaya has been serving on the LAAC as a member-at-large since April 2017 and her desire to continue serving on the LAAC reflects her passion and commitment to the issue of language access. Her passion, work experience, and advocacy for LEP individuals are assets she will bring to the council.

Therefore, OLA respectfully requests your favorable consideration in confirming the appointment of Ms. Valentina Yarovaya to the LAAC.

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

TESTIMONY OF VALENTINA YAROVAYA
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: April 5, 2021, 1:00 P.M. VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Re: GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 652 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, VALENTINA YAROVAYA, for a term to expire 06-30-2024.

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

My name is Valentina Yarovaya. I live in Honolulu for 8 years. I am a retired special education teacher but continue working. Born and raised in USSR, I immigrated to the USA in 1992. I am bilingual in Russian, English, and American Sign Language. I received my Master's in Special Education from Adelphi University in New York along with the Bilingual Certificate from Touro College (NY). I am certified and experienced teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students and students with different needs. Currently, I am working as a substitute teacher for the Hawaii DOE and teaching a master's course online for the University of Phoenix. As a member of the Language Access Advisory Council, I hope to be part of a team that is working to improve access for limited English-speaking persons and assist anyone in our community who needs services and language resources. I am sure that teaching in a diverse classroom and understanding the stages the English Language Learners go through as well as my personal experience will help me in bringing equality to limited English speakers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.