

DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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March 29, 2021

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH

Senate Concurrent Resolution 95/Senate Resolution 74 – Requesting the Governor to Convene a Working Group to Develop Recommendations for Effective Communications with Limited English Proficient Persons and Persons with Disabilities Before, During, and After Emergencies and Natural Disasters

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports the intent of Senate Concurrent Resolution 95/Senate Resolution 74, which asks the Governor to convene a working group to develop recommendations for effective communications with limited English proficient persons and persons with disabilities before, during, and after emergencies and natural disasters.

When it comes to communicating with persons with communication disabilities (e.g., individuals who are blind, deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires state and local governments to provide equal access in all programs and services. As for individuals who are limited English proficient, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires meaningful access to all programs and operations of entities that receive federal or state funds. This impacts a significant number of Hawaii residents; Johns Hopkins School of Medicine reports that a fifth of all Americans have hearing loss, and, according to the Office of Language Access, about one in four Hawaii residents speak a language other than English at home.

It is acknowledged that advancements in communications, including the increasing use of technology to provide information to the public via the internet, has presented challenges with ensuring compliance with accessibility requirements. Convening a working group to address various issues involving emergency communications would be a positive step in overcoming such challenges and ensuring equal access for persons with disabilities and meaningful access for individuals who are limited English proficient.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 27, 2021

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Senator Jarett Keohokalole, Chair
Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SCR 95/SR 74** – REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP
TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER EMERGENCIES AND NATURAL DISASTERS.

Hearing: March 29, 2021, 1:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports these resolutions. DHS agrees with testimony of the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations in the House versions that more time will likely be needed to meet and prepare a report. DHS respectfully requests continued support of the Legislature so that identified agencies have the requisite staff and fiscal resources to address this and other systemic needs whose importance is magnified by the pandemic. Proposed cuts to staff and other operational resources will reduce the agency's ability to do this necessary work.

PURPOSE: These resolutions request the governor to convene a working group to develop recommendations for effective communications with limited English proficient persons and persons with disabilities before, during, and after emergencies and natural disasters.

DHS will participate on this working group. The disparate impact of the pandemic on Pacific Islander communities highlights the necessity for additional work to be done to improve coordination and prioritization of resources towards a range of communication strategies.

This experience also reinforces the importance of the ongoing work of the Office of Language Access (OLA) and its role to provide central coordination and technical assistance to state agencies to translate or interpret information to improve access to benefits and services for all Hawaii residents.¹

State and federal law require DHS and others government entities to maintain language access services for Hawaii's culturally diverse population regarding all public benefits and services. All entities receiving federal funds are subject to provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq. (Title VI), that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance and must provide meaningful access to services.

Similarly, the value and importance of the work and contribution of the Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) are highlighted particularly during this legislative session as greater access and participation by individuals with disabilities to legislative and other meetings are greatly improved. DCAB is a vital resource to agencies and the communities at all times to maintain access to services and remain compliant with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.²

Especially in the current pandemic and other emergency management events where additional federal assistance is necessary to address the tremendous needs of Hawaii's residents and businesses, government agencies need the services and technical expertise that OLA and DCAB provide to maintain meaningful access to benefits and services for Hawaii's residents with limited English language proficiency and or who have disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on these resolutions.

¹ See OLA website at <https://health.hawaii.gov/ola/>.

² See DCAB website at <https://health.hawaii.gov/dcab/about-us/>.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-First Legislature, 2021 Regular Session

Senate Committee on Human Services

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Monday, March 29, 2021, 1:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 225

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

by:

Debi S. Tulang-DeSilva

Program Director

Office on Equality and Access to the Courts

Bill No. and Title: Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 95 / Senate Resolution No. 74, Requesting the Governor to Convene a Working Group to Develop Recommendations for Effective Communications with Limited English Proficient Persons and Persons with Disabilities Before, During, and After Emergencies and Natural Disasters.

Judiciary's Position:

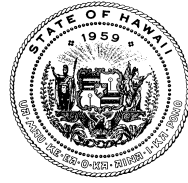
The Judiciary supports the intent of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 95 and Senate Resolution No. 74.

The Judiciary is committed to ensuring access to justice through language assistance services for limited English proficient persons and reasonable accommodations for persons with

disabilities. At all times, and particularly in emergency and natural disaster situations, LEP persons and persons with disabilities must have timely, accurate and useful information.

The Judiciary, through its Office on Equality and Access to the Courts, appreciates the benefits in convening stakeholders who will, collectively, develop a plan for providing the necessary resources. We appreciate being included as a member of this working group and will be happy to serve to assist this important purpose.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this matter.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS
1177 Alakea Street, Room B-100
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.ola@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony COMMENTING on SCR 95/ SR 74

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP
TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER EMERGENCIES AND NATURAL DISASTERS.

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOOLE, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 3/29/2021

Room Number: Via Vedioconference

1 **Agency's Position:** The Office of Language Access (OLA) appreciates the intent of the Senate
2 Concurrent Resolution 95/ Senate Resoulution 74, as it seeks to establish a working group to
3 develop recommendations for effective communications with limited English proficient persons
4 and persons with disabilities before, during, and after emergencies and natural disasters, and
5 offer the following comments.

6 **Purpose and Justification:** The agency notes that the aspirational and exploratory goal of both
7 resolutions are in line with the mission of OLA which is to address the language access needs of
8 Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons and ensure their meaningful access to services,
9 programs, and activities offered by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state
10 government, including departments, offices, commissions, boards, and other state-funded
11 agencies.

12 The lack of English proficiency has strong impacts on people's economic and social
13 activities, safety, health literacy and wellness, access to education, employment, and important
14 public assistance, benefits, programs and services. Languages barriers are known to be an

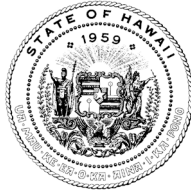
1 important contributor to the ineffectiveness of emergency information dissemination and related
2 problems, especially in multicultural communities.

3 As the recent events demonstrate, disaster/emergency can strike our state anywhere,
4 anytime, and often without warning. With so many of Hawaii's residents speaking a language
5 other than English at home, it is critical that all our communities have access to service and
6 information to help them prepare for and respond to emergencies.

7 The establishment of a working group is an important step toward information-sharing
8 and the development of ideas and action steps to address the language needs before, during, and
9 after emergencies and natural disasters.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on these resolutions.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



DOUGLAS MURDOCK
CHIEF INFORMATION
OFFICER

OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HI 96810-0119
Ph: (808) 586-6000 | Fax: (808) 586-1922
ETS.HAWAII.GOV

Testimony of
DOUGLAS MURDOCK
Chief Information Officer
Enterprise Technology Services

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Tuesday, March 29, 2021

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 95
SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 74

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH LIMITED
ENGLISH PROFICIENT PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER EMERGENCIES AND NATURAL
DISASTERS.

Dear Chairs San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Keohokalole and Baker and members of the
committee:

The Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) supports Senate Concurrent Resolution No.
95 and Senate Resolution No. 5.

ETS looks forward to being a member and collaborating with the working group.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SCR 95 SR74
REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO
DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER EMERGENCIES AND NATURAL DISASTERS.**

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 3/29/2021

Room Number: 225

Chair Ichiyama and Vice-Chair Eli,

The Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) SUPPORTS SCR 95/SR 74, which will establish a working group to ensure meaningful communications access for limited English proficient (LEP), deaf, blind, and disabled persons during times of natural disasters or other emergencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic emergency revealed the current gaps in our agency's ability to provide meaningful access. It is well documented that state agencies were unable to properly serve LEP communities during the crisis of the pandemic.¹ These shortcomings had dire consequences, as, for example, Pacific Islanders were twice as likely to be killed or hospitalized by COVID-19.² And although the COVID-19 emergency exposed these challenges with greater clarity, they have

¹ See, e.g., Anita Hofschneider, *Health Officials Knew COVID-19 Would Hit Pacific Islanders Hard. The State Still Fell Short*, Civil Beat, August 17, 2020, at <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/08/health-officials-knew-covid-19-would-hit-pacific-islanders-hard-the-state-still-fell-short/>; Anita Hofschneider, *Advocates: Lack of Interpreter Services at Unemployment Office is Illegal*, Civil Beat, July 7, 2020, at <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/07/advocates-lack-of-interpreter-services-at-unemployment-office-is-illegal/>

² Anita Hofschneider, *Hawaii Pacific Islanders Are Twice As Likely to Be Hospitalized for COVID-19*, Civil Beat, November 20, 2020, at <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/11/hawaii-pacific-islanders-are-twice-as-likely-to-be-hospitalized-for-covid-19/>.

long been a concern. Hawai'i has been cited repeatedly by the federal Department of Justice and the federal court for failure to ensure meaningful access to services by LEP persons.³

As we head into the next chapter of the COVID-19 fight with vaccine distribution and an eye toward economic recovery, and as we face natural disasters like the recent flash floods, meaningful access is as important as ever. We will only be able to end the COVID-19 emergency and be well-prepared for future emergencies if state agencies are able to meaningfully communicate with *all* of Hawai'i's residents. This resolution is an critical step to that goal.

The resolution proposes to establish a working group to share information and solutions, develop and leverage resources, and formulate action steps to ensure meaningful communications access for limited English proficient, deaf, blind, and disabled persons during times of natural disasters or other emergencies. The working group brings together governmental emergency response entities, information technology leadership, government agencies, and community advocates. The purpose is singularly aligned with the mission and business goals of many State and county offices to assure the safety and welfare for all people in Hawaii.

HCIR recently engaged in a conversation with Governor Ige to express the deep concerns raised by limited English proficient persons in accessing vital COVID-19 health and safety information and Unemployment Insurance benefits throughout the pandemic. At the conclusion of our conversation, Governor Ige pledged his support for a working group. We are grateful for his support, and we are encouraged that this working group may be an important step forward in our goal of keeping *all* of Hawai'i safe and healthy.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Catherine Chen, Co-chair, Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Liza Ryan Gill, Co-chair, Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights

³ Hawai'i Department of Human Services, Consent Decree (2008); Hawai'i Office of Elections, United States District Court for the District of Hawai'i, Settlement Agreement (2010); Hawai'i Department of Transportation, FACE v. DOT, United States District Court for the District of Hawai'i Settlement Agreement (2015); Hawai'i Judiciary, Technical Assistance Agreement (2015); Hawai'i Public Housing Authority, Settlement Agreement with the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (2016). Additionally, multiple language access complaints were filed in 2020 against the Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Unemployment Insurance Division for its failure to translate vital documents, including applications for Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), and its failure to provide interpreters. These complaints remain pending with the federal Department of Labor, Civil Rights Division.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services Committee on Health

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO

DATE: Monday, March 29, 2021 (1:00 p.m., Conference Rm. 225)

RE: **IN SUPPORT of SCR95/SR74, Requesting the Governor to Convene a Working Group to Develop Recommendations for Effective Communications with Limited English Proficient Persons and Persons with Disabilities Before, During, and After Emergencies and Natural Disasters**

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been serving people in need in the State of Hawaii since 1947.

CCH supports SCR95/SR74, which would establish a working group to provide recommendations on effective communications with Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities before, during, and after emergencies and natural disasters.

CCH provides services for many Limited English Proficient (LEP) clients through many of our programs. CCH also serves over 4,000 older adults each year. We recognizes the importance of effective communication to ensure that individuals with communication challenges are prepared and safe during times of emergencies and natural disasters.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i asks for your support of SCR95/SR74. For more information or questions, please feel free to email Diane Terada, Division Administrator, at diane.terada@catholiccharitieshawaii.org or call her via phone at 527-4702.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

SCR-95

Submitted on: 3/25/2021 12:35:41 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/29/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dina Shek	Testifying for Medical-Legal Partnership	Support	No

Comments:



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SR74 and SCR 95

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATOR LES IHARA, JR., VICE-CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHAKALOLE, CHAIR
SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, VICE-CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 3/28/2021 Room Number: 225

To: Chairs San Buenaventura, Chair Keohakalole, Members of the Committees

From: Amy Agbayani, Co-Chair and Pat McManaman Co-Chair

The Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights (HF CR) stands in strong support of SR74 and SCR95 with recommendations and extends its gratitude to the Committees for hearing this measure.

SR74 and SCR95 propose to establish a working group to assess the current status of communication access for persons with a disability and limited English proficient persons during disasters and emergencies and the challenges facing government entities in meeting those needs. SR74 and SCR 95 are aligned with the mission and business goals of state and county offices to assure the safety and welfare for all people in Hawai`i.

To effect these objectives, HF CR respectively requests that page 3, lines 35-38 be amended to read as follows:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to:

- (1) Assess the current status of communication access for persons with a disability and limited English proficient persons during natural disasters and emergencies;
- (2) Assess the current communication needs and challenges across government entities during natural disasters and emergencies;

(3) Identify information technology resources and other resources and costs;
and

(4) Identify and propose legislative solutions and submit recommendations to
the Legislature; and

The working group is inclusive. It will bring to the table government emergency response entities, information technology leadership, government offices with keen insight into communication issues facing limited English proficient persons and persons with disabilities, relevant community advocacy organizations, and persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency with the aligned goal of improving communication access during times of crisis and natural disasters.

Additionally, the HFCR and the Hawai`i Coalition for Immigrant Rights recently engaged in a conversation with Governor Ige to express the deep concerns raised by limited English proficient persons in accessing vital COVID-19 health and safety information and Unemployment Compensation benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these resolutions.

Amy Agbayani, Co-Chair and Pat McManaman Co-Chair

Hawai Friends of Civil Rights

SCR-95

Submitted on: 3/28/2021 11:13:30 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/29/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Larry Ordonez	Testifying for Ethnic Education Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony in support of SCR95 and SR74

Submitted by Ethnic Education Hawai`i, Larry Ordonez President

Ethnic Education Hawai`i (EEH) is a non-profit organization founded in 1994. Our mission is to provide equal access to information in English and languages spoken in our community. We support successful participation and integration of our multi-ethnic and multilingual community in Hawai`i.

EEH strongly supports SCR 95 and SR 74 relating to persons with disabilities and limited English proficient persons (LEP). We advocate for improved communications and support the needs of persons with disabilities and LEP.

EEH requests an amendment (same amendment proposed by the Hawaii Friends of Civil Rights). We request that page 3, lines 35-38 be amended to read as follows:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to:

- (1) Assess the current status of communication access for persons with a disability and limited English proficient persons during natural disasters and emergencies;
- (2) Assess the current communication needs and challenges across government entities during natural disasters and emergencies;
- (3) Identify information technology resources and other resources and costs; and
- (4) Identify and propose legislative solutions and submit recommendations to the Legislature; and

EEH advocates for language access compliance with federal and state laws. EEH is committed to making communication accessible for all people in Hawai'i, including those who are limited English proficient. A working committee to review the communication needs of the thousands of individuals who do not speak English adequately during emergencies and disasters is important for these LEP and the state. EEH has and will continue to support government agencies and our ethnic language media partners (eg. KNDI radio which has programs in 16 languages) to provide bilingual communications. Access to information and government services should be equally accessible to all, including immigrant communities who have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration and support of SCR 95 and SR 74

P.O. Box 4777
Kaneohe, HI 96744

March 29, 2021

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senate Committee on Health
Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 225
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: SCR 95/SR/SR 74 Requesting the Governor to Convene a Working Group to Develop Recommendations for Effective Communications with Limited English Proficient Persons and Persons with Disabilities Before, During and After Emergencies and Natural Disasters.

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the joint Committees,

My name is Debra Jackson and I am a business owner, an individual who is hard of hearing, member of the Deaf and Blind Task Force, disability advocate, and retired Planner/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator of the Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB). I **support** of SCR 95/SR 74 whose purpose is to ensure equal access to information communicated to the public by people with limited English proficiency (LEP) and communication needs that are different due to a disability from the English-speaking community.

These two groups of people (LEP and people with disabilities) are often neglected or underserved within our community, across the nation and internationally. Their needs cannot be met by a working group consisting of state and county agencies and advocates. They must be included in the discussion from the beginning of the process. People with LEP or disabilities are not in need of our protection or guidance because they communicate in a different manner. Instead, they need to be included in the planning process and have their concerns listened to and addressed. People of all abilities need to be encouraged to function as independently as possible, but how can that be done, if to their needs are not heard and met? People with disabilities on the Mainland working to improve emergency preparedness efforts use the mantra: "Nothing About Us Without Us!" Their efforts along with ours have moved emergency preparedness towards being more inclusive which is at the core of these resolutions.

Based on my knowledge and expertise, I suggest the following as amendments to these resolutions:

1. All references in the resolutions to people with limited English proficiency and people with disabilities be changed to "people-first" language. Making this simple change will indicate that you as Legislators are addressing the needs of groups of people who have different communication needs from the average citizen but are not less than or in greater need because of this difference. This will also serve to

- provide an equal status to the people in the populations impacted (which advocacy groups may not be able to provide); and
2. Increase the number of people with LEP and disabilities on the working group. Requiring state and county agencies to work alongside an equal number of people with LEP and disabilities can be a positive learning experience for everyone. Efforts on the Mainland have shown this to be true. And although a larger group may be difficult to manage, but the end result will be worth the effort.

The first step is for state and local government agencies is to understand that there are federal and state laws that need to be followed consistently across agencies. Although they may not have been previously followed, state and county agencies need to comply with the law. The state will continue to be sued until they are in compliance with federal and state laws. The best way to avoid lawsuits is to know and comply with existing federal and state laws, in addition to teaching your staff to exhibit an attitude that is one of willingness to provide accessible services.

A working group may assist in navigating through the issues, but the only way to avoid lawsuits is to develop recommendations by including people impacted by the situation and to take their needs into consideration. Hawaii is the most diverse state in the nation, so we should understand that diversity means we live and work with people from many cultures who may communicate in various ways. The means to create solutions that work for everyone in the community is the result of working with each other. You cannot be successful until all stakeholders are involved. Nothing successful can happen without including us in the process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,
Debra L. Jackson
Owner
Alii Interpreting Services, LLC

SCR-95

Submitted on: 3/25/2021 9:57:16 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/29/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this Bill.

SCR-95

Submitted on: 3/25/2021 11:08:25 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/29/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in strong support of SCR95 for the sake of inclusion and effective communication.

March 26, 2021

Date: Monday, March 29, 2021

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Committee on Human Services

Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Committee on Health

Honorable Jarrett H. Keohokalole, Chair

Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Dear Chairs Sen. San Buenaventura, Sen. Keohokalole and
Vice Chairs Sen. Ihara, Sen. Baker;

I am writing to support SCR 95/SR74 – Requesting the Governor to convene a working group to develop recommendations for effective communication with individuals with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities before, during and after emergencies and natural disasters. Needless to say, this would literally be a “life and death” situation when accurate, immediate and real-time information is crucial.

Due to the urgency of this issue, perhaps setting up a working group would only delay the critical need to describe guidelines for disseminating life sustaining information. HI-EMA already has a workgroup that has had regular meetings describing various strategies to enable quick and accurate information dissemination. Perhaps this diverse group can focus specifically on strategies to meet the communication needs of persons with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities with special communication access needs.

I strongly urge you all to pass this important resolution.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Macdonald, M.Ed.

Oahu Resident

SCR-95

Submitted on: 3/28/2021 9:29:19 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/29/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha HMS amd HTH Committees,

I am writing in support of SCR95. As a public health professional working with low English proficiency (LEP) people and the son of refugees, I have witnessed firsthand the need for culturally competent and in-language access for many local communities, especially during a disaster. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to highlight the stark disparities in healthcare access, especially for LEP communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

SanBuenaventura1 - Ed Karl

From: Rod Macdonald <rjmacdonald@hawaiiintel.net>
Sent: Saturday, March 27, 2021 4:53 PM
To: HTH Committee; HMS Committee
Cc: rjmacdonald@hawaiiintel.net
Subject: Accommodation request: SCR95 testimony

HMS, Sen. San Buenaventura:
HMScommittee@capitol.hawaii.gov

and

HTH, Sen. Keohokalole
HTHcommittee@capitol.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

My name is Rod Macdonald. I am both deaf and blind, and rely exclusively on braille to access online services. I am unable to access the Legislature's new "portal" for submitting testimony.

As a result I am writing to request the accommodation that you convey my testimony to the Committee on Human Services, and to the Committee on Health, for their hearing on March 29, 2021, at 1:00 pm.

Thank you

Rod Macdonald

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

and

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

DATE: Monday, March 29, 2021
TIME: 1:00 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

Re: SCR 95 / SR 74 - REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER EMERGENCIES AND NATURAL DISASTERS.

Honorable Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Members:

My name is Rod Macdonald. I am writing to urge your vigorous support of SCR 95 / SR74.

I lead a pretty active life for a soon-to-be-80-year-old. I write articles, play correspondence chess, and exchange emails with friends around the world. I go out to dinner occasionally with my wife, take occasional trips to the mainland, and sometimes go shopping for tech gear at Best Buy.

But ... in the event of an emergency I have just one resource open to me - my wife. I am deaf; I am blind; I have severe arthritis/poor balance and need a walker to get around. I live on the sixth floor of a 40-story high-rise. If I had to use the stairs in the event of an emergency, I would estimate it would take me more than half an hour to get to the ground level. Heaven only knows what I would do once I got there. If my wife were not at home I wouldn't know to evacuate.

What resources, if any, are available to folks in my situation? I worked for many years and paid my taxes every time. I am a retired federal employee of 27 years in Washington D.C. I put in another ten years, mostly as a teacher. I am independent and still pay taxes. In the event of an emergency, most folks can watch TV, listen to the radio, receive alerts on their smart phones, hear public address systems ... all sorts of communication resources are available, and none would work for me.

In the event of an emergency, first responders are trained to provide a wide range of services, but they would have no clue how to communicate with me, and in the chaos of the emergency would have no patience to listen to my explanation of how to do so.

Yes, I am a minority-of-one, but there are quite a few of us out here - different, outside-the-box, but every bit as much a citizen of this country, this State, this community as you folks are.

I suggest to you, members of these committees, we do need to sit down and think these issues through, and that is what this resolution is calling for. Please enthusiastically support this resolution.

Thank you.

Roderick J. Macdonald, MA, LHD