



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

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Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
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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: April 6, 2022

Subject: **GM 673** - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, BARBARA TOM, for a term to expire 06-30-2024.

Hearing: Friday, April 8, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Agency's Position: The Office of Language Access (OLA) **supports** the nomination of **BARBARA TOM** to the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC) to fill the seat of "one representative from a covered entity," pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 321C-7(a)(2) for a term to expire June 30, 2024.

Purpose and Justification: Consideration in support of confirmation of the LAAC Gubernatorial Nominee, Ms. Barbara Tom.

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.

The LAAC assists the Executive Director of OLA by providing input on implementation and compliance with Hawaii's language access laws and on the quality of oral and written language services provided under the law. The LAAC also offers feedback on state agency or covered entity training of employees who are likely to have contact with LEP persons; policies and

procedures for language services; competency in working effectively with interpreters and translators; and understanding of the dynamics of language services between clients, providers, and interpreters.

Ms. Tom is currently holding the position of Director of Waipahu Safe Haven, a project within the Waipahu Community Association. In this position, Ms. Tom is responsible for the operation of the Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center. The Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center is located in a densely populated area of Waipahu, and addresses the social determinants of health, education, and welfare, by providing language access services to help clientele address all areas of need. The Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center also works in partnership with multiple community organizations. In addition, Ms. Tom has more than 20 years of experience working as a public health nurse at the Hawaii Department of Health.

Ms. Tom's desire to serve on the LAAC demonstrates her passion and commitment to the issue of language access. As an advocate and a public health educator, we are confident that Ms. Tom will be a valuable member of the LAAC.

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

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



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hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

DATE OF HEARING: April 8, 2022 at 1:00 PM

TO: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
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 673 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Barbara Tom, for a term to expire 06-30-24

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

We write in strong support of GM 673, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Barbara Tom, for a term to expire 06-30-24. Barbara Tom is an active member of the 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 Hawai'i, and she would be an invaluable contribution to the Language Access Advisory Council.

Barbara has been an active leader of the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) for the past year. 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. We formed in September 2020, when we identified major priorities for Hawai'i's immigrant communities. Language access was named as the top priority and greatest need. Barbara has long been a champion and supporter of language access rights, and she stepped up to lead many of HCIR's language access efforts. She is an active member of the Language Access Ad Hoc Committee, and she has been a leader in our Language Access and Equity campaign during the 2022 state legislative session.

At HCIR, Barbara has been able to leverage her decades of expertise as a service provider and language access advocate in Hawai'i, including as the founder of the Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant Resource Center. Barbara's passion for language access for all has shone through in every HCIR meeting. 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 Barbara. Barbara has brought members of the community to legislative hearings, taught them how to submit testimony, and facilitated greater access to the democratic process for all community



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members. Barbara is always professional in her role and is extremely accessible to the community. She would be a strong asset to LAAC.

Barbara's expertise is deeply needed at this moment. She has been working for nearly twenty years with our Pacific Island communities to improve access and education. Language access has always been challenging for Pacific Islander communities, and this was especially highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, as has been extensively documented and reported. This crisis has demonstrated the need to expand our capacity for qualified trained interpreters and translators for all service delivery points in Hawaii.

Barbara 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.

Barbara 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 is extremely lucky to have her, and LAAC would be as well.

Thank you,

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

GM-673

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 11:22:34 AM

Testimony for HTH on 4/8/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terrina Wong	Testifying for Pacific Gateway Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Barbara Tom is a committed and devoted leader in the field of immigration and migrant services, whose unwavering, tireless efforts have made major contributions to the Micronesians in our community and the importance of language access to ensure their equitable access to services and programs. She would be a valuable asset to the Language Access Advisory Council. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work side-by-side with her on language access issues. She has my personal full support as well as the full support of Pacific Gateway Center.

Hearing Date: Friday, April 8, 2022 at 1:00 PM.
Conference Room 225 & Video Conference

Senate Committee on Health

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

From: Jeremiah Brown
English Learners program coordinator, Waipahu High School

Re: Testimony in **Support** of GM 673 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **BARBARA TOM**, for a term to expire 06-30-2024.

April 5, 2022

Senators Keohokalole and Baker:

I write in support of Barbara Tom's nomination to the Language Access Advisory council.

Barbara is a tireless advocate for language access and has the experience, relationships, and knowledge needed to further the goals of the advisory council.

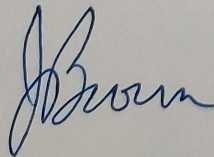
I have worked with Barbara on several projects in the Waipahu community and have seen her passion for improving the lives of underserved and marginalized groups. She has organized and led successful COVID vaccination and testing clinics, after school tutoring programs, internet access initiatives, and held cultural events. She has connected the community with service providers, organized food drives, fundraisers, and many other community events.

She has especially strong relationships with the Marshallese and Micronesian communities. built over years of collaboration and trust.

Her background in public health is especially relevant in this context as well.

Barbara Tom is the perfect person for this effort, she will draw on her extensive experience, network, and expertise to have an impact on language access statewide.

Sincerely,



Jeremiah Brown



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LEEWARD O'AHU OFFICE ANNEX
94-521 Farrington Highway
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

April 5, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Barbara Tom. The Leeward District English Learner (EL) Program has partnered with Barbara for the past 10 years. Together, we have been doing grassroots work with the Waipahu Community through the Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center. Because the majority of the community center's members are second language learners, we have had direct access to the language access needs of the community. Her ongoing involvement with the community center's steering committees and the Bilingual School Home Assistants from the Leeward District EL Program have given her a direct link to the heartbeat of the community. Barbara has been instrumental in establishing partnerships with other organizations such as Catholic Charities to help fund interpreters for the center's rental and utilities support program, and health enrollment (supported by Legal Aid). She also has been partnering with Sue Zeng on creating an interpretation program for community members who are interested in entering the field as a career. Further plans include involving Waipahu High School academies as a means to introduce students to possibilities in this field as a sustainable pool of future human resources.

Barbara's experience as a retired Public Health Nurse has been instrumental in helping her understand the implementation and compliance with Hawai'i's language access law. Her long standing relationship with Sue Zeng has also given her experience with exposure to quality oral and written language services and the need of state governmental agencies to effectively implement this law. Finally, her experience with the Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center has helped her understand the dynamics of interpretation between clients, providers, and interpreters.

In working with Barbara all these years, she has shown true dedication and passion towards her work with the Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center, its community, and beyond. She is greatly respected by the community members, as well as with governmental officials. Her ability to work with all levels has been her asset in getting things done.

Barbara is a valuable and committed member of the state of Hawai'i and will be an asset to your council. Please feel free to contact me should you have questions at: (808) 675-0443.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Uchishiba".

Greg Uchishiba
English Learner, Leeward District Educational Specialist



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hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

DATE OF HEARING: April 8, 2022 at 1:00 PM

TO: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice-Chair

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

RE: Testimony in Strong Support of GM 673 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Barbara Tom, for a term to expire 06-30-24

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

I write in strong support of GM 673, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Barbara Tom, for a term to expire 06-30-24. Barbara Tom is an active member of the 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 Hawai'i, and she would be an invaluable contribution to the Language Access Advisory Council.

I have worked with Barbara on numerous occasions and always found her to be compassionate and reliable. When we were tasked with getting CARES Act relief dollars to Limited-English Proficient (LEP) communities she organized food drives and pickups with local leaders that had information packets in the first language of the folks she was assisting. She has taken every opportunity to put LEP communities at the center of her work and to expand the services available to them.

Barbara 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 is extremely lucky to have her, and LAAC would be as well.

Thank you,

Liza Ryan Gill, Co-Chair of the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)

Hearing Date: Friday, April 8, 2022 at 1:00 PM.
Conference Room 225 & Video Conference



Senate Committee on Health

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

From: Dina Yoshimi

Re: Testimony in **Support** of GM 673 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **BARBARA TOM**, for a term to expire 06-30-2024.

Esteemed Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members:

I am Dina Yoshimi, a private citizen who serves as the Director of the Hawai'i Language Roadmap in the College of Arts, Languages & Letters at UH-Mānoa. I am writing in strong support of GM 673 which provides for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council of Barbara Tom, Gubernatorial Nominee. Barbara epitomizes the responsible citizen who sees a need in her community and acts on it vigorously, faithfully, and lovingly.

Nearly 10 years ago, as the newly appointed director of a multilingual initiative at UH-Manoa, I was a newcomer to the laws and processes of language access in the state, and was especially lacking in awareness of the severe language barriers facing the COFA migrant community in Hawai'i. To remedy this gap, I made my initial contact with a representative of the UH Richardson School of Law who had been working with this community for several years. Within the first 5 minutes of our conversation, Barbara's name was mentioned as "someone you have to meet". This was followed by accolades regarding her unflinching commitment to fighting for language access for this underserved community and her longstanding ties in and deep knowledge of the community.

Since that day, I have gained much from hearing Barbara speak, and from participating with her in endeavors to improve language access for the underserved populations in the state. These experiences have provided me with a deep appreciation for her work in establishing and developing Waipahu Safe Haven and their many initiatives to promote fair and equitable access for migrant and immigrant communities to urgently needed resources for daily existence, livelihood, and raising and educating their keiki. The safe haven that Barbara's efforts create extends, perhaps most importantly, to fostering each individual's fundamental sense of humanity and self-worth in a state where the im/migrant experience continues to be a harsh

one for so many Pacific Islanders. Barbara is not only deeply knowledgeable, but also has trust of the community. Unquestionably, she is well-prepared and well-suited for this position, and merits your most serious consideration as a nominee, and confirmation to this position.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support of GM 673.

Respectfully submitted,

Dina Yoshimi

Aiea, HI