



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

802 LEHUA AVENUE
PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
elections.hawaii.gov

SCOTT T. NAGO
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1883, HD1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

March 1, 2022

Chair Luke and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support with amendments of House Bill No. 1883, HD1. This bill requires the exterior of the envelope containing the ballot package for elections by mail to include instructions on how to obtain language translation services in Hawaiian and certain other non-English languages; and applies to all elections beginning with the 2022 primary election.

This bill supports voters needing assistance and specifies the languages that should be provided. While we support the intent of this bill, we propose amending the effective to date to begin with the 2024 Primary Election. Due to supply chain issues, we have already started the production of the envelopes for the 2022 Elections and would not be able to add the languages.

For the 2022 Elections, the exterior of the envelope contains the statement, "For language assistance please call the Office of Elections at (808) 453-8683" in Traditional Chinese, Ilocano, and Tagalog, which are covered languages pursuant to Section 203 of the Federal Voting Rights Act. When calling our office, these voters would be assisted using a translation service.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1883, HD1.



HAWAII FRIENDS OF CIVIL RIGHTS

February 25, 2022

TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice-Chair

FROM: Amy Agbayani, Co-Chair & Pat McManaman, Co-Chair

SUBJECT: **HB1883, HD1 Relating to Elections**

HEARING: March 1, 2022, 11:00 AM
Via Videoconference

The Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights stands in **Strong Support of HB1883, HD1** including the Hawaiian language and the addition of the five most foreign languages spoken by limited English proficient persons to the exterior of ballot envelopes mailed to voters.

Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) requires states and counties to provide language assistance during elections for certain languages once the federal threshold is triggered.¹ Language assistance, as defined under Section 203 of the VRA, means “all

¹ “Section 203 mandates that a state or political subdivision must provide language assistance to voters if more than five (5) percent of voting-age citizens are members of a single-language minority group and do not ‘speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process,’ and if the rate of those citizens who have not completed the fifth grade is higher than the national rate of voting-age citizens who have not completed the fifth grade. When a state is covered for a particular language minority group, an exception is made for any political subdivision in which less than five (5) percent of the voting-age citizens are minority groups who are unable to speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process. Under Section 203 of the VRA, according to the calculations recently released on Dec. 8, 2021, in the Federal Register, Honolulu County must provide translation services in Chinese (including Taiwanese) and Filipino and Maui County must provide translation services in Filipino. 86 Fed. Reg. 69611 (Dec. 8, 2021).

information that is provided in English.” This includes voter registration materials, polling place notices, sample ballots, instructional forms, voter information pamphlets, **and ballots**. As such, the state Office of Elections is **required** to provide **mail-in ballots** in “Chinese including Taiwanese” and “Filipino” for Oahu County and in “Filipino” for Maui County, in addition to English ballots.

This measure preserves the Section 203 requirements and extends assistance to additional limited English proficient persons. Voting is a fundamental political right. See, *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 US 356, 370 (1886). Yet, Between January 1 and December 7, 2021, at least 19 states passed 34 laws restricting access to voting.² This measure sets Hawai’i apart from those states seeking to limit voting access and signals to our sister states that access sustains democracy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure,

² Voting Laws Roundup: December 2021, Brennan Center for Justice, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-december-2021>, (Accessed 1/31/2022).



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1883
RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: 3/1/2022

Chair Luke and Vice-Chair Yamashita,

We write to SUPPORT HB 1883. Voting is a fundamental right, and language access must not be a barrier. It is not only necessary as a matter of civil rights—it is also the federal law.

Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) requires that once language assistance determinations are met, state and counties must provide language assistance during elections for certain languages.¹ As the Department of Justice has explained, Section 203 of the VRA requires that “[a]ll information that is provided in English... covers not only the ballot, but all election information - voter registration, candidate qualifying, polling place notices, sample ballots, instructional forms, voter information pamphlets, *and absentee and regular ballots.*” (emphasis added).²

Thus, under federal law, the Hawai`i state Office of Elections is required to provide all registered voters ballots in the required Section 203 languages (“Chinese including Taiwanese for Honolulu

¹ Federal law mandates that a state or political subdivision must provide language assistance to voters if more than five (5) percent of voting-age citizens are members of a single-language minority group and do not “speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process,” and if the rate of those citizens who have not completed the fifth grade is higher than the national rate of voting-age citizens who have not completed the fifth grade. When a state is covered for a particular language minority group, an exception is made for any political subdivision in which less than five (5) percent of the voting-age citizens are minority groups who are unable to speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process. *See Section 203 Language Determinations*, U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about/voting-rights/voting-rights-determination-file.html> (last accessed Feb. 2, 2022).

² *Language Minority Citizens*, U.S. Dept. of Justice, <https://www.justice.gov/crt/language-minority-citizens> (last accessed Feb. 2, 2022).



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

County and Filipino for Maui County”).³ This applies to all forms of ballots, including absentee/mail-in ballots or regular ballots.

These requirements create a legal “floor” and Hawai`i must do at least these federal requirements to provide language assistance, whether or not the state have other measures to further language access. *See California Fed. S.L. Assn. V. Guerra*, 479 U.S. 272 (1987).

Finally, in addition to federal requirements, this bill is important, because the entire electorate, including limited English proficient individuals, deserves to have their voices heard. More than 23 million U.S. naturalized immigrants were eligible to vote in the 2020 presidential election, making up more than 10% of the nation’s overall electorate.⁴

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 Under Section 203 of the VRA, according to the calculations recently released on Dec. 8, 2021 in the Federal Register, Honolulu County must provide translation services in Chinese (including Taiwanese) and Filipino and Maui County must provide translation services in Filipino. 86 Fed. Reg. 69611 (Dec. 8, 2021).

⁴ Naturalized Citizens Make-Up Record One in Ten U.S. Eligible Voters in 2020, Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2020/02/26/naturalized-citizens-make-up-record-one-in-ten-u-s-eligible-voters-in-2020/>, (Accessed 1/31/2022).



Committee on Finance
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair, Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 1, 2022, 11:00 a.m. Via Videoconference
HB 1883, HD1 1 RELATING TO ELECTIONS

TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports HB1883 H.D. 1 that requires the exterior of the envelope containing the ballot package include instructions on how to obtain language translation services in Hawaiian and certain foreign languages.

This bill is an important aspect of protecting access to voting for eligible voters who are not proficient in English. What is new here is providing instructions on the outside ballot envelope, a logical first step in voting by mail for registered voters who receive a ballot but are not proficient in English. We applaud other efforts to provide multilingual support on brochures, forms, signage etc. as described in testimony by the Honolulu City and County Elections Administrator for the companion measure SB 2161.

The League of Women Voters is confident our County Clerks understand which languages are triggered under the Federal Voting Rights Act for language assistance in their respective counties and work carefully with the State Office of Elections to make sure printed ballot and voting material corresponds with these requirements

The Office of Elections has reported that for the 2022 elections they have already started printing envelopes in Chinese, Ilocano, and Tagalog (but apparently not in Hawaiian). Since Ka Olelo Hawaii is one of the official languages of our State we urge that Hawaiian language instructions appear on the exterior ballot beginning with the 2022 elections. That would be the respectful and correct approach for this official State ballot.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

League of Women Voters of Hawaii
P.O. Box 235026 ♦ Honolulu, HI 96823
Voicemail 808.377.6727 ♦ my.lwv.org/hawaii ♦ voters@lwvhi.org

Statement Before The
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

11:00 AM

Via Video Conference and Conference Room 308
in consideration of**HB 1883, HD1**
RELATING TO ELECTIONS.

Chair LUKE, Vice Chair YAMASHITA, and Members of the House Finance Committee

Common Cause Hawaii supports HB 1883, HD1, which (1) requires the exterior of the envelope containing the ballot package for elections by mail to include instructions on how to obtain language translation services in Hawaiian and certain other non-English languages and (2) applies to all elections beginning with the 2022 primary election.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to reforming government and strengthening our representative democracy by improving and modernizing our voting and elections systems to ensure that they are equitable and work for everyone.

Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) requires that, once determinations are met¹, state and counties must provide language assistance during elections for certain language minority groups who are unable to speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process. Under Section 203 of the VRA, according to the calculations recently released on Dec. 8, 2021 in the Federal Register, Honolulu County must provide translation services in Chinese (including Taiwanese) and Filipino and Maui County must provide translation services in Filipino. 86 Fed. Reg. 69611 (Dec. 8, 2021).

While this is a good start for Hawaii, this is insufficient, and Hawaii must do better for our voting limited English proficient citizens. The recent Decennial Census shows that Hawaii is the most diverse state in the nation with a diversity index of 76.0%. See <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html> (retrieved Jan. 31, 2022). Further, fifteen percent of

¹ “Section 203 mandates that a state or political subdivision must provide language assistance to voters if more than five (5) percent of voting-age citizens are members of a single-language minority group and do not ‘speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process,’ and if the rate of those citizens who have not completed the fifth grade is higher than the national rate of voting-age citizens who have not completed the fifth grade. When a state is covered for a particular language minority group, an exception is made for any political subdivision in which less than five (5) percent of the voting-age citizens are members of the minority group and are limited in English proficiency, unless the political subdivision is covered independently. A political subdivision is also covered if more than 10,000 of the voting-age citizens are members of a single-language minority group, do not ‘speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process,’ and the rate of those citizens who have not completed the fifth grade is higher than the national rate of voting-age citizens who have not completed the fifth grade.” See <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/12/08/2021-26547/voting-rights-act-amendments-of-2006-determinations-under-section-203> (retrieved Jan. 31, 2022).

eligible voters in Hawaii are immigrants. See https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/02/GMD_2020.02.26_Immigrant-Eligible-Voters.pdf (retrieved Feb. 25, 2022).

The April 2016 DBEDT Research and Economic Analysis Division report on Non-English Speaking Population in Hawaii indicates that non-English speakers at home in Hawaii increased by 44% from 1980 to 2014. See https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/data_reports/Non_English_Speaking_Population_in_Hawaii_April_2016.pdf at Executive Summary (retrieved Jan. 31, 2022). Ilocano, Tagalog, and Japanese were the top three most common non-English languages spoken at home in Hawaii. *Id.* However, English proficiency among the non-English speaking population varied substantially by language with proficiency being low -- less than 40% of the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and Ilocano speaking population speak English very well. *Id.*

Voting “is regarded as a fundamental political right [] preservative of all rights.” *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 US 356, 370 (1886). A voting citizen’s right to notice of ballot translation services should not be dependent, especially here in Hawaii, on which county the person resides, especially when printing of ballots and translation services are provided by the State Office of Elections.

Moreover, amendments to the Hawaii State Constitution in 1978, including the reinclusion of the Hawaiian language as an official language of the state of Hawaii, were intended to require the State to institute measures that are reasonably calculated to revive the Hawaiian language. See *Clarabal v. Department of Education*, 145 Haw. 69, 446 P.3d 986 (2019); Haw. Const. art. XV, § 4. Providing notice of translation services on voting materials in the Hawaiian language is long overdue and would be an important step in recognizing the equal dignity of Hawaiians and their language in Hawaii.

Thus, according to Section 203 of the VRA, Honolulu and Maui counties must provide electoral “information that is provided in English . . . in the minority language as well. This covers not only the ballot, but all election information - voter registration, candidate qualifying, polling place notices, sample ballots, instructional forms, voter information pamphlets, and absentee and regular ballots - from details about voter registration through the actual casting of the ballot, and the questions that regularly come up in the polling place.” See <https://www.justice.gov/crt/language-minority-citizens> (retrieved Jan. 31, 2022). Hawaii’s voting citizens on Kauai and Hawaii counties should also be informed of language access rights, and HB 1883, HD1 will help to achieve that. We should also endeavor to provide more than the minimum language translations required by law to ensure that all our limited English proficient citizens may fully engage in the electoral process.

For these reasons, Common Cause Hawaii supports HB 1883, HD1 and respectfully urges the Committee members to pass HB 1883, HD1 out of your Committee. If you have questions for me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii



HIPHI Board

Kilikina Mahi, MBA
Chair
KM Consulting LLC

JoAnn Tsark, MPH
Secretary
John A. Burns School of Medicine,
Native Hawaiian Research Office

Debbie Erskine
Treasurer

Keshia Adolpho, LCSW
Molokai Community Health Center

Camonia Graham - Tutt, PhD
University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu

Carissa Holley, MEd
Hale Makua Health Services

May Okihiro, MD, MS
John A. Burns School of Medicine,
Department of Pediatrics

Misty Pacheco, DrPH
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Michael Robinson, MBA, MA
Hawai'i Pacific Health

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP
Kaiser Permanente

Dina Shek, JD
Medical-Legal Partnership
For Children in Hawai'i

Garret Sugai
Pharmicare Hawai'i

Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD
State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public Defender

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community Health
Worker Initiative

COVID-19 Response

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol Free
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Food Security Coalition

Date: February 28, 2022

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Finance

Re: Support for HB 1883, HD1, Relating to Elections

Hrg: March 1, 2022 at 11:00 AM via videoconference

The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) is in **support of HB 1883, HD1**, which requires the ballot envelopes to include instructions on how to obtain language translation services in Hawaiian and certain other languages.

Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.

One in nine people living in Hawai'i has limited English proficiency and a lack of language access creates dangerous barriers to meaningful civic engagement and participation. HIPHI supports increasing civic engagement and believes providing information on ballots about how to obtain language translation services will reduce barriers to participation in the democratic process. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Amanda Fernandes'.

Amanda Fernandes, JD
Policy and Advocacy Director



Senate Committee on Finance

Tuesday, March 1st, 2022, 11:00a.m.

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action Supports: HB1883 HD1

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) I am submitting testimony in support of HB1883 HD1.

HB1883 HD1 requires the exterior of the envelope containing the ballot package for elections by mail to include instructions on how to obtain language translation services in Hawaiian and certain other non-English languages. Applies to all elections beginning with the 2022 primary election.

HAPA supports this measure and measures that help to boost voter engagement and help the government be more representative of our diverse population. We support this and all measures that make our government more accountable, transparent, open and accessible to residents.

This measure is specifically relevant to Hawai'i, given our huge diversity and "melting pot" of cultures and races. The recent Decennial Census shows that Hawaii is the most diverse state in the nation with a diversity index of 76.0%¹ and we know that about fifteen percent of eligible voters in Hawaii are immigrants².

The April 2016 DBEDT Research and Economic Analysis Division report on Non-English Speaking Population in Hawaii indicates that non-English speakers at home in Hawaii increased by 44% from 1980 to 2014³. Ilocano, Tagalog, and Japanese were the top three most common non-English languages spoken at home in Hawaii.

¹<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html>

²https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/02/GMD_2020.02.26_Immigrant-Eligible-Voters.pdf

³https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/data_reports/Non_english_Speaking_Population_in_Hawaii_April_2016.pdf

Further, providing notice of translation services on voting materials in the Hawaiian language is long overdue and would be an important step in recognizing the equal dignity of Hawaiians and their language in Hawaii.

We are well aware of, and concerned about, the growing apathy and lack of participation in the government process and encourage all measures that will help boost engagement.

Please pass HB1883 HD1 and help increase voter engagement and turnout.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Frederick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "A" and "F".

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

HB-1883-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2022 2:28:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Lisa Huynh Eller	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The April 2016 DBEDT Research and Economic Analysis Division report on Non-English Speaking Population in Hawaii indicates that non-English speakers at home in Hawaii increased by 44% from 1980 to 2014. See https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/data_reports/Non_English_Speaking_Population_in_Hawaii_April_2016.pdf at Executive Summary (retrieved Jan. 31, 2022). Ilocano, Tagalog, and Japanese were the top three most common non-English languages spoken at home in Hawaii. *Id.*

However, English proficiency among the non-English speaking population varied substantially by language with proficiency being low -- less than 40% of the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Ilocano speaking population speak English very well.

Further, providing notice of translation services on voting materials in the Hawaiian language is long overdue and would be an important step in recognizing the equal dignity of Hawaiians and their language in Hawaii.

For these reasons, I support HB1883, HD1.

HB-1883-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2022 4:13:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
tlaloc tokuda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Fin Chair and Committee, I support HB1883 HD1 because as the Decennial Census recently reported that Hawaii has the most diverse ethnic mix the land. DC also found that many people don't speak English in the home. So if we want to encourage people to vote we need information on how to get information so they can get voter information in their own language. Please pass HB1883 HD1

Mahalo for your considerations.

Tlaloc Tokuda

Kailua Kona HI 96740

HB-1883-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 4:57:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
David Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The recent Decennial Census shows that Hawaii is the most diverse state in the nation with a diversity index of 76.0%. And fifteen percent of eligible voters in Hawaii are immigrants.

The April 2016 DBEDT Research and Economic Analysis Division report on Non-English Speaking Population in Hawaii indicates that non-English speakers at home in Hawaii increased by 44% from 1980 to 2014. Ilocano, Tagalog, and Japanese were the top three most common non-English languages spoken at home in Hawaii.

However, English proficiency among the non-English speaking population varied substantially by language with proficiency being low -- less than 40% of the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and Ilocano speaking population speak English very well.

Further, providing notice of translation services on voting materials in the Hawaiian language is long overdue and would be an important step in recognizing the equal dignity of Hawaiians and their language in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

HB-1883-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 12:38:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Meizhu Lui	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Finance Committee,

Hawaii is proud of the diversity of its residents. As we continue to strive for greater democracy by increasing the capacity of each eligible voter to participate in decisions affecting their lives, HB 1883 is a positive step. Having as easy access as possible to translation services facilitates participation. This is an easy and inexpensive measure.

I strongly support HB 1883.

Thank you.

Meizhu Lui

District 1, Hamakua, Hawaii Island

HB-1883-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 1:16:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Michele Mitsumori	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB1883, HD 1, Relating to Elections, requiring the exterior of the envelope containing the ballot package to include instructions on how to obtain language translation services in hawaiian and in certain foreign languages.

The recent Decennial Census shows that Hawai'i is the most diverse state in the nation, with a diversity index of 76.0%, and 15% of the State's eligible voters are immigrants. Many public documents and services already include these instructions, and certainly, elections are one of the pillars of our democracy that everyone should participate in. A measure that is already practiced in other areas and which has been proven to boost voter turnout rates needs to be passed.

Further, providing notice of translation services on voting materials in the Hawaiian language is long overdue, and would be an important step in recognizing the equal dignity of Hawaiians and their language in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for HB1883, HD 1.

HB-1883-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 3:10:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
laurie boyle	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB1883 for the simple reason that Hawai'I is such a diverse population with many who struggle with English that much more needs to be done in assisting them with translation services and clear instructions on how to vote so it counts.

Mahalo for your time.

HB-1883-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 7:48:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

All Elections should be in English. If you do not understand English they you should not be Voting Period. Any one that promotes this will be violating the Constitution.



LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

530 S. KING ST. RM 100
HONOLULU HI 96813
(808) 768-3800
WWW.HONOLULUELECTIONS.US

TESTIMONY OF REX QUIDILLA
ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR,
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1883, HD1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

March 1, 2022

Chair Nakashima and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill No. 1883, HD1 that proposes to include instructions on how to obtain language translation service in Hawaiian and, at a minimum, the five most utilized foreign languages by limited English proficient persons in the State.

Past efforts to provide multilingual support focused solely on “covered” languages pursuant to the Federal Voting Rights Act (VRA). The covered languages for Honolulu are Chinese and Filipino (Ilocano, Tagalog). The County of Maui is covered under Filipino. The Counties of Kauai and Hawaii are not covered by any language under the VRA.

VRA compliance entails the translation of the full suite of voter information available to English speaking voters. This includes brochures, forms, signage, website, and most importantly, the ballot. Support for languages not covered by the VRA is left to the discretion of the various elections offices and their respective resources.

To that end, the City mailed packets which included translated the ballot, ballot instructions, and return envelopes in the VRA-covered languages. The translated ballot packets are mailed to voters by request. In the 2020 General Election, approximately 1,102 and 682 ballot packets were mailed to Chinese and Ilocano voters, respectively.





530 S KING ST RM 100
HONOLULU HI 96813
(808) 768-3800
WWW.HONOLULUELECTIONS.US

For the 2020 elections, recognizing the significant change in election scheme, the City produced a primer explaining the mechanics of voting. The primer was not only translated in the 2 languages required by the VRA but we added 15 additional language translations, one of which was Hawaiian. We think this effort was positive first step in enhancing accessibility to the elections process

For the 2022 Elections, the Honolulu Elections Division will continue to support language access by providing Over the Phone Interpretation (OPI) to voters who call our office as well as Video Remote Interpretation (VRI) for voters at the Voter Service Center. Additionally, the City will be expanding the written translated materials available to voters.

The City and County of Honolulu supports HB 1883, HD1 and will work with the State Office of Elections on the exterior of the ballot packet envelope.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1883, HD1.

