

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

February 20, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2457 – RELATING TO IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS.**

Hearing: February 22, 2022, 10:05 a.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and defers to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) and the DLIR Office of Community Services (OCS).

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to appropriate moneys to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Office of Community Services to restore funding for immigrant resource centers.

Immigrants in Hawaii are vital members of the community and the workforce. No matter the reason for immigration, many immigrants faced hardships in their home countries to come to the United States to pursue their dreams and a better life for themselves and their families. Many immigrants have limited English proficiency (LEP), and seeking information and resources in English is not easy. Though DHS is working to improve access to its services, navigating government services and programs remains cumbersome for U.S. citizens and can be more difficult for those born and raised abroad.

Restoring funds for immigrant resource centers will support immigrant and refugee populations transitioning to life in the United States. For long-term immigrant residents,

resource centers will help individuals access new information such as available pandemic resources, other new opportunities, or other program changes. The Department also encourages DLIR OCS to consider serving Hawaii's migrant populations. Importantly, having trustworthy immigrant resource centers may also prevent harm perpetrated by the unfortunate elements of society who prey on vulnerable individuals and immigrants.

If the measure passes, DHS will collaborate with DLIR OCS to assist immigrant and migrant individuals and families to the extent allowable by law.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
www.labor.hawaii.gov

ANNE PERREIRA-EUSTAQUIO
DIRECTOR

JOANN A. VIDINHAR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

February 23, 2022

To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Date: Wednesday, February 23, 2022

Time: 10:05 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 211, State Capitol and via Videoconference

From: Anne Perreira-Eustaquio, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: S.B. 2457 RELATING TO IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS

The department supports this measure, provided it does not conflict with the priorities identified in the Governor's Supplemental Budget request, that appropriates funding to the DLIR's Office of Community Services (OCS) to fund Immigrant Resource Centers. The DLIR values the OCS's critical work and appreciates the appropriation that will enable them to continue to serve low-income individuals, immigrants and refugees.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2457

February 23, 2022
10:05 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2457.

S.B. No. 2457 appropriates unspecified general funds in FY 23 to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Office of Community Services, to restore funding for Immigrant Resource Centers for the purpose of providing staff and resources to assist immigrant and refugee populations throughout the State.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



Testimony in support of SB 2457
RELATINNG TO IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS
Submitted by Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights,
Co-chairs: Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman

We strongly support SB 2457 RELATING TO IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS which was identified in the HCR 169 report to the legislature as a community need that should be reinstated and funded. HCR 169 report and SB 2457 are supported by the Filipino Legislative Caucus. It should be noted that nearly half of all immigrants to Hawai'i are from the Philippines (46%); Japan (8%), China (8%), Korea (7%), Micronesia (5%), Vietnam (4%), Mexico (2%), Canada (1.5%), and Hong Kong (1.5%). Fifty-seven percent of Hawaii's immigrants are naturalized US citizens and many have US born children.

We thank the legislature for passing HCR 169 requesting DLIR to organize a working group comprised of state offices and immigrant serving organizations to submit a report to the 2022 legislature identifying barriers and recommendations "to improve access to government services for immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities to make civic and economic contributions to the community." I was co-chair with DLIR director for the HCR 169 working group.

HCR 169 and SB 2457 provide important information about the state's foreign born community and barriers they face: (A) there are over 250,000 foreign born persons in the state; including 145,000 who are naturalized citizens; their participation in Hawaii's economy (40% of

agricultural workers, 33% of tourism/hospitality workers and 23% of healthcare workers; B) barriers many immigrants face include discrimination, cultural misunderstanding, language access to government information and services.

We thank the legislature for establishing the Office of Community Service (OCS) in 1985 by consolidating "four anti-poverty agencies administering state and federal fund and its mission to serve low-income communities, immigrants and refugees. SB 2457 noted that OCS funds for immigrants has been reduced/eliminated eg. \$700,000 OCS funds for immigrant resource centers has not been available for years. SB 2457 appropriation request is to re-institute funding for Immigrant Resource Centers to provide needed services to immigrants (e.g. orientation, assistance with immigration forms, referrals to government services, language assistance etc. Funding for non-profit organizations who have experience working with low-income immigrant limited English speaking persons are needed and will benefit not only immigrants but also our state's economy.

We support funds to re-instate immigrant resource centers and a staff position for the Office of Community Services. This funding will allow immigrant serving community agencies and OCS address needs of our immigrant communities and will help OCS meet its legislative mandate to serve low-income individuals, immigrants and refugees.

We respectfully urge your support for SB 2457

Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman, co-chairs
Hawai'i Friends of Civil Service

Statement Before The
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Wednesday, February 23, 2022
10:05 AM
Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

in consideration of
SB 2457
RELATING TO IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS.

Chair DELA CRUZ, Vice Chair KEITH-AGARAN, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee

Common Cause Hawaii comments in support of SB 2457, which appropriates moneys to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Office of Community Services to restore funding for immigrant resource centers.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to reforming government and strengthening our representative democracy - one that works for everyone.

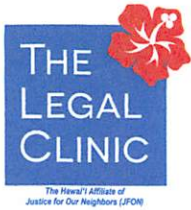
The recent Decennial Census shows that Hawaii is the most diverse state in the nation with a diversity index of 76.0%. See <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html> (retrieved Jan. 31, 2022). Nearly one in five Hawaii residents is an immigrant and of that number nearly three in five immigrants in Hawaii are naturalized U.S. citizens. See <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-hawaii> (retrieved Feb. 4, 2022).

For immigrants and our naturalized citizens to be able to fully engage with our government and participate in our democratic society, it is imperative that an agency such as the Office of Community Services has the resources to assist immigrants and others, including low-income individuals and refugees.

For these reasons, Common Cause Hawaii comments in support of SB 2457. If you have questions for me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii



February 21, 2022

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Corey Park, JD
President

Lowell Chun-Hoon, Esq.
Vice President

Roman Leverenz
Secretary

Kelley D. Settles
Treasurer

Amy Agbayani, PhD

Shanty Asher, JD

Dr. Ismail Elshikh

Clare Hanusz, Esq.

Susan A. Li, Esq.

Agnes Malate, PhD

Shingayi Masiya

Rev. Amy C. Wake

Susan S. K. Wong, JD

ADVISORY BOARD

Rev. Dr. Tom Choi,
*First United Methodist
Church*

John Egan, Esq.
*Director-Refugee &
Immigration Law Clinic,
William S. Richardson
School of Law
Univ. of Hawai'i at Mānoa*

Hearing Date: February 23, 2022, 10:05 a.m.
Via Videoconference; Conference Room 211

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2457, Relating to Immigrant Resource Centers

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Clinic (“TLC”) submits this testimony in support of SB 2457, which would appropriate moneys to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Office of Community Services, to restore funding for immigrant resource centers.


TLC provides legal and related services to Hawai'i's low- and moderate-income immigrant community. In the course of our work, we have seen that the needs of the State's growing immigrant community have been sorely neglected.

According to the 2020 Census, immigrants (those born outside the United States) make up 19.3% of our population (273,012 of our residents). This is compared to 13.7% of the U.S. population. Moreover, of our foreign-born population, over 41% (112,050) have not naturalized and become U.S. citizens. Hawai'i is also home to another migrant community in need of services, that being the residents from the states comprising the Compact of Free Association (“COFA”) – the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau. These residents are entitled to migrate to the U.S. under the Compact, which has its origins in the United States' use of these countries for nuclear testing and other military purposes. It is estimated that there are approximately 18,500 COFA residents in Hawai'i, and that they are believed to make up the fastest growing portion of our migrant community.

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit the low-income immigrant community particularly hard. They are disproportionately impacted by the loss of jobs, lower rates of health care coverage, higher rates of Covid-19 infection, and less access to unemployment insurance and other public benefits due to language barriers and unfamiliarity with the system.

Passage of SB 2457 will provide a step forward in aiding these communities by increasing the delivery of services to them. We urge you to pass SB 2457 out of committee.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corey Park", written in a cursive style.

Corey Park
President, Board of Directors
The Legal Clinic



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

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2457 RELATING TO IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: 2/23/2022

Dear Committee Members,

I write to SUPPORT SB2457, which appropriates money to the Office of Community Services (OCS) to restore funding for immigrant resource centers for the purpose of providing staff and resources to assist immigrant and refugee populations throughout the State.

There are Barriers to Access for Immigrants.

There are many barriers to access for immigrants and refugees in Hawai`i. The COVID-19 pandemic emergency revealed the current gaps in the ability of all agencies to provide meaningful access to immigrants. For example, it is well documented that state agencies were unable to properly serve LEP communities during the pandemic.¹

Although the COVID-19 emergency exposed these challenges with greater clarity, they have 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.²

In addition to language access, the myriad of federal immigration statuses and documents has created confusion employees and systems, leading to further barriers for immigrants. For example, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there initially was a barrier to COFA-status immigrants accessing Unemployment Insurance because the computer system did not

¹ See, e.g., 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 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.



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

allow for I-94 numbers.³ And finally, many groups of immigrants continue to face discrimination here in Hawai`i.⁴

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have heard numerous stories of immigrant families unable to access benefits and services that they were entitled to and, just like all working Hawai`i residents, had paid into. Among Hawai`i's working population during the 2012-2016 period, 22% were born in foreign countries. Almost one fourth of foreign-born workers were found in Accommodation and Food Services (22.5%), followed by Retail Trade (12.8%,) and Health Care and Social Assistance (11.8%).⁵ Moreover, in Hawai`i's labor force, 37% of all workers, 25 years and older, speak a language other than English at home.⁶

With the proper resources to lower barriers, refugees and immigrants would have opportunities to contribute even more. Overall the state must do better for its immigrant residents.

Office of Community Services Should Provide Immigrant Resource Centers.

This bill is an important step to addressing this problem, as immigrant resource centers can properly connect refugees and immigrants to needed services, benefits, and opportunities. The Office of Community Services (OCS), an administratively-attached agency to DLIR, was established by the Legislature in 1985 to assist low-income individuals and families, refugees, and immigrants so they can live healthier lives, achieve greater economic self-sufficiency, and increase their contributions to the state.

Although OCS's focus and funding for immigrant and refugee communities has eroded over time, OCS's current primary focus and funds are for low-income communities. OCS is responsible for numerous statewide programs and provides millions of federal and state dollars to low-income communities for food, health services, employment services, and more.⁷ OCS's

³ Anita Hofschneider, *Hawaii Updates Unemployment Application to Include Pacific Migrants*, Civil Beat, April 14, 2020, at <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/04/hawaii-updates-unemployment-application-to-include-pacific-migrants/>.

⁴ Anita Hofschneider, *Report: Battling Discrimination Against Micronesians Requires Policy Changes*, Civil Beat, October 15, 2019, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2019/10/report-battling-discrimination-against-micronesians-requires-policy-changes/>

⁵ Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, *Hawai`i's Working Population: An Analysis by Industry 2012-2016*, (April 2018).

⁶ Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, *The State of Hawai`i Data Book 2018*, Table 1.45 – Language Spoken at Home, by Educational Attainment and Employment Status: 2013-2017 (2018).

⁷ Here are just a few examples of OCS's staff portfolio:

Federal Food Programs. OCS works with the Hawai`i Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, the Food Basket, and others. OCS facilitates the delivery of free USDA food to hundreds of thousands of Hawai`i residents through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and through two other federal food programs – the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.



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

history, legislative purpose, and current responsibilities make it well positioned to implement the much-needed Immigrant Resource Centers for the state.

As we head into the next chapter of the fight to end COVID-19 and recover economically, we will only be successful if services and opportunities include *all* of Hawai`i's residents, including immigrants. This bill is an important step for that goal.

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

State-funded programs. In Fiscal Year 2020 OCS managed a portfolio of 92 state grants-in-aid totaling more than \$25.6 million, of which approximately \$23.8 million was for capital improvement projects and \$1.8 million was for operating grants. OCS also administers a state-funded employment services program that helps Hawai`i's low-income individuals and legal permanent residents gain employment skills, find, and retain jobs.

COVID-19 programs. OCS's existing federally funded programs received direct funding from the CARES Act. In addition, OCS administered CARES Act funds (appropriated from the Legislature) for food distribution. OCS staff are experienced and needed by the state to administer essential programs aimed to provide a social safety net to low-income, vulnerable, and disadvantaged communities during the COVID-19.

SB-2457

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 10:02:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2022 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Liza Ryan Gill	Testifying for HI Coalition for Immigrant Rights	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I write to SUPPORT SB2457, which appropriates money to the Office of Community Services (OCS) to restore funding for immigrant resource centers for the purpose of providing staff and resources to assist immigrant and refugee populations throughout the State.

Offices that support foreign-born populations in a state or city are not a novelty. Numerous states including Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, and Illinois have offices dedicated to immigrant integration, while several dozen cities have created similar offices to support the needs and advancement of their foreign-born populations. Hawai'i created the OCS over 35 years ago, in that time our foreign-born population has increased but our support for this population has waned.

There are Barriers to Access for Immigrants.

There are many barriers to access for immigrants and refugees in Hawai'i. The COVID-19 pandemic emergency revealed the current gaps in the ability of all agencies to provide meaningful access to immigrants. For example, it is well documented that state agencies were unable to properly serve LEP communities during the pandemic.

Although the COVID-19 emergency exposed these challenges with greater clarity, they have 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.

In addition to language access, the myriad of federal immigration statuses and documents has created confusion employees and systems, leading to further barriers for immigrants. For example, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there initially was a barrier to COFA-status immigrants accessing Unemployment Insurance because the computer system did not allow for I-94 numbers. And finally, many groups of immigrants continue to face discrimination here in Hawai'i.

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have heard numerous stories of immigrant families unable to access benefits and services that they were entitled to and, just like all working Hawai`i residents, had paid into. Among Hawai`i's working population during the 2012-2016 period, 22% were born in foreign countries. Almost one fourth of foreign-born workers were found in Accommodation and Food Services (22.5%), followed by Retail Trade (12.8%,) and Health Care and Social Assistance (11.8%). Moreover, in Hawai`i's labor force, 37% of all workers, 25 years and older, speak a language other than English at home.

With the proper resources to lower barriers, refugees and immigrants would have opportunities to contribute even more. Overall the state must do better for its immigrant residents.

Office of Community Services Should Provide Immigrant Resource Centers.

This bill is an important step to addressing this problem, as immigrant resource centers can properly connect refugees and immigrants to needed services, benefits, and opportunities. The Office of Community Services (OCS), an administratively-attached agency to DLIR, was established by the Legislature in 1985 to assist low-income individuals and families, refugees, and immigrants so they can live healthier lives, achieve greater economic self-sufficiency, and increase their contributions to the state.

Although OCS's focus and funding for immigrant and refugee communities has eroded over time, OCS's current primary focus and funds are for low-income communities. OCS is responsible for numerous statewide programs and provides millions of federal and state dollars to low-income communities for food, health services, employment services, and more. OCS's history, legislative purpose, and current responsibilities make it well positioned to implement the much-needed Immigrant Resource Centers for the state.

As we head into the next chapter of the fight to end COVID-19 and recover economically, we will only be successful if services and opportunities include all of Hawai`i's residents, including immigrants. This bill is an important step for that goal.

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



LATE

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2457
RELATING TO IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair**

Hearing Date: 2/23/2022

Dear Committee Members,

I write to SUPPORT SB2457, which appropriates money to the office of community services (OCS) to restore funding for immigrant resource centers for the purpose of providing staff and resources to assist immigrant and refugee populations throughout the State.

There are many barriers to access for immigrants and refugees in Hawai'i. Since its founding in 1973, Pacific Gateway Center has had as its mission to empower immigrants, refugees, and the vulnerable towards self-sufficiency. Driven by this mission, we have served as an immigrant resource center and the need is compelling. We have first-hand experience in creating and implementing social justice initiatives to alleviate barriers to ensure equity for our targeted populations in job creation, language access, health, social services, housing, and legal immigration services, to name a few. Immigrants and refugees are filled with uncertainty, anxiety and stress given their need to rebuild their lives with dignity.

This bill is an important step to addressing this problem, as immigrant resource centers can properly connect refugees and immigrants to needed services, benefits, and opportunities. Our clients have become successful entrepreneurs, farmers, and contributing members to our local economy; their children have been mainstreamed into our education system and have graduated from our public schools; acquired their legal permanent residence or become US citizens; and have become civically engaged in our community participating in community events.

We service through our diverse programs close to 3,500 clients per year.

I fully SUPPORT SB2457.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

En Young
Executive Director



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

LATE

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO

DATE: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 (10:05 a.m., Conference Rm. 211 & Videoconf)

RE: **IN SUPPORT OF SB 2457, Relating to Immigrant Resource Centers**

CCH supports SB 2457, which would restore funding for Immigrant Resource Centers.

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. Our agency serves limited English proficient clients across all of our 40+ programs and provides legal immigration services for low-income immigrants, refugees and migrants on Oahu and Hawaii Island.

Restoring funding for Immigrant Resource Centers will provide needed access to information, services, resources and other support for immigrants, refugees and migrants throughout the State. The pandemic has made it evident that there are multiple barriers to access, particularly for low-income immigrants, refugees and migrants. Language/communication, technology literacy and understanding of bureaucratic systems are all challenges that must be learned in order to participate fully in our society. Immigrants, refugees and migrants need help along their journey of becoming fully participatory, self-sustaining members of our community. Immigrant Resource Centers can be safe places where they can receive that help.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i asks for your support of SB 2457 to ensure equal access for all.

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 (808) 527-4702.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 524-HOPE(4673) • www.CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org



SB-2457

Submitted on: 2/19/2022 1:29:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2022 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Candice Sakuda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2457. The restoration of funding for immigrant resource centers will provide necessary assistance for immigrant and refugee populations throughout the Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

SB-2457

Submitted on: 2/20/2022 11:55:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2022 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Cynthia J. Goto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Strong support.

SB-2457

Submitted on: 2/20/2022 9:44:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2022 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and WAM Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB2457, which appropriates money to the Office of Community Services (OCS) to restore funding for immigrant resource centers for the purpose of providing staff and resources to assist immigrant and refugee populations throughout the State.

As a public health professional working with foreign-born people and as the child of Vietnamese refugees, I have witnessed firsthand the desire for our local immigrant communities to contribute to our economies and culture. In the devastating economic fallout of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this measure would provide resources for communities that would enhance our workforce and civil society. Without it, these communities, and the State, would be less equipped to thrive and grow, both socially and economically.

I fully SUPPORT SB2457.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

SB-2457

Submitted on: 2/21/2022 3:59:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2022 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
John Robert Egan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2457

RELATING TO IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: 2/23/2022

Dear Committee Members,

I write to SUPPORT SB2457, which appropriates money to the Office of Community Services (OCS) to restore funding for immigrant resource centers for the purpose of providing staff and resources to assist immigrant and refugee populations throughout the State.

Immigrants are such an important part of our community, and yet this critically important immigrant-serving function has been underfunded and constrained from being as effective as it could be in meeting community needs.

This bill is an important step to addressing this problem.

I fully SUPPORT SB2457.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

John Robert Egan, Immigration Lawyer and Educator

To: The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

From: Jolina Baruela

Date: Monday, February 22, 2022

Re: Support for SB2457, Relating to Immigrant Resource Centers

My name is Jolina Baruela, a Social Services Assistant and a student of Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I am testifying in **support** of SB2457, Relating to Immigrant Resource Centers.

On page 3 (line 18 and line 19) of the bill, it stated, "Among the groups that face barriers to equal access to services are those with limited English proficiency." My family and I (at a young age) immigrated to Hawai'i and I witnessed the hardship that my parents had experienced pertaining to accessing services. Hardship is greater for individuals/families with limited English proficiency to access services. I believe that restoring funds for immigrant resource centers will help address barriers.

I **strongly support** SB2457, Relating to Immigrant Resource Centers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2457

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 8:47:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2022 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Valerie Rose	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I write to SUPPORT SB2457, which appropriates money to the office of community services (OCS) to restore funding for immigrant resource centers for the purpose of providing staff and resources to assist immigrant and refugee populations throughout the State.

There are many barriers for immigrants and refugees in Hawai`i to access resources such as language, transportation, finances, and technology. This bill is an important step to addressing this problem, as immigrant resource centers can properly connect refugees and immigrants to needed services, benefits, and opportunities.

SB-2457

Submitted on: 2/21/2022 5:29:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2022 10:05:00 AM

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

Comments:

If You are not an American Citizen you get Nothing No Help. There are many Homeless Americans that get no Help and you want to Help Illegals were is your head!!