



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS**

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In reply, please refer to:
File: 24-011

**Testimony in Support of SB 2782 SD2
RELATING TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair
House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

Hearing Date: 3/13/2024

Room Number: Conf. Room 309 &
Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
- 2 Executive Supplemental Budget Request.

- 3 **Agency's Position:** The Office of Language Access (OLA) supports this measure, provided the
- 4 measure's passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Governor's Executive
- 5 Supplemental Budget Request. OLA defers to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services
- 6 (ETS) on implementation and resource needs.

- 7 **Purpose and Justification:** This measure requires ETS to develop multilingual accessibility
- 8 standards; appropriates funds to establish one full-time position to develop multilingual
- 9 accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services and declares that the
- 10 general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded.

- 11 OLA notes that the aspirational and exploratory goal of this measure is in line with the mission
- 12 of OLA, which is to address the language access needs of persons with Limited English
- 13 Proficiency (LEP). OLA is tasked with providing technical assistance and coordinating resources
- 14 to reduce the burden of meeting language access obligations.

1 Hawaii is one of the most culturally diverse states and has one of the highest proportions of non-
2 English speakers in the nation. Many of these non-English speakers are immigrants and migrants
3 with limited English proficiency (LEP). According to the 2018-2022 American Community
4 Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, it is estimated that 25.73%, or
5 351,542, of Hawaii's residents aged 5 years and older speak a language other than English at
6 home. Of these, 150,743, or 11.06%, indicated that they speak English 'less than very well.'

7 English proficiency, or the lack thereof, has a significant impact on people's economic and social
8 activities, as well as on health literacy and wellness. It affects their ability to successfully access
9 education, employment, and important public assistance, benefits, programs, and services.

10 Currently, many state agencies are using their websites, portals, and digital platforms to provide
11 information and services to the state's residents, accept applications for services and benefits, and
12 manage online accounts. The design and use of electronic information technology can create
13 barriers to meaningful access for persons with LEP, but it can also help eliminate existing
14 barriers and promote language access if designed well and reviewed for continuous
15 improvement.

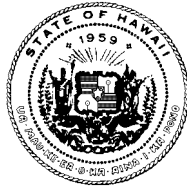
16 The strategic use of digital tools and resources is crucial for enhancing language access for
17 persons with LEP. Providing persons with LEP with easy-to-find government digital information
18 could encourage their participation in government services, programs, and activities.

19 Establishing multilingual accessibility standards will provide a critical link to communication
20 and make government services accessible to persons with LEP.

21 OLA agrees with the testimony from ETS submitted to both the Senate Committee on Labor and
22 Technology and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. The testimony highlighted the
23 necessity of OLA's involvement in providing expertise on language access laws, policies, and
24 guidelines that may exist at the federal, state, and local levels. OLA stands ready to collaborate
25 with ETS, offering our expertise in language access to facilitate the development of standards.
26 This measure demonstrates a reasonable step that our state is taking to ensure that persons with
27 LEP have meaningful access to our government services, programs, and activities.

28 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 12, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

The Honorable Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2782 SD2 – RELATING TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.**

Hearing: March 13, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, provides comments, and defers to the Office of Enterprise Technology and the Office of Language Access. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: This bill requires the Office of Enterprise Technology Services to develop multilingual accessibility standards. Appropriates funds to establish 1 full-time position (1.0 FTE) to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services. Declares that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

The Committee on Labor and Technology (SD1) amended the measure by:

- (1) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The Committee on Ways and Means (SD2) further amended the measure by:

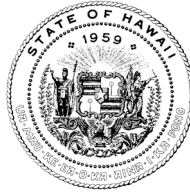
- (1) Codifying the Office of Enterprise Technology Services' responsibility to create multilingual accessibility standards in a new section of Chapter 27, Hawaii Revised Statutes, rather than in section 27-43, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (2) Correcting references to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services;
- (3) Clarifying the definition of the terms "access" and "accessibility";
- (4) Deleting the definition of a term that is not used within the measure; and
- (5) Making technical nonsubstantive amendments for purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

DHS appreciates the Legislature's investment in supporting the development of multilingual accessibility standards for the State to improve language access needs for Hawaii's multigenerational and ethnically diverse residents. Developing the statewide capability to provide real-time and accurate translation of government websites and programs will help residents navigate government programs and improve residents' engagement with public services. DHS agrees with testimony that improving language access capabilities is critical for communicating information during emergency management incidents. In addition, establishing accessibility standards will improve procurement options for government agencies and perhaps lead to more shared services.

DHS notes that the Department provides access to language interpreters by request and provides numbers for various language interpreters on the DHS program websites.

The Department's Limited English Proficiency Program Manager and the Office of Language Access also provide essential services during emergency management incidents that would benefit from a more robust Statewide language access infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HI 96810-0119
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ETS.HAWAII.GOV

Written Testimony of
DOUGLAS MURDOCK
Chief Information Officer
Enterprise Technology Services

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
AND LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024

SENATE BILL 2782 SD2
RELATING TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Dear Chairs Perruso and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Kapela and Garrett and members of the committees:

The Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) **supports** this bill to develop multilingual accessibility standards. We offer the following comments.

Artificial intelligence is rapidly being developed to provide extensive translation capabilities on personal devices such as computers, mobile phones and tables. Similar technology will also be available for websites and online forms. However, it is critical to check the results of any AI technology for accuracy.

The Office of Language Access (OLA) needs to be involved as the business executive sponsor in contributing their expertise of language access laws, policies, and guidelines that may exist at the federal, state and local levels. OLA should also be considered the subject matter experts for developing language access programs across the state, and to determine what languages need to be supported. Finally, OLA has state-wide jurisdiction whereas ETS' jurisdiction is normally limited to the Executive Branch and has no authority over the other branches of state government.

ETS would be involved in providing subject matter expertise on the technical perspective of implementing various translation technologies that can be applied to various IT systems and determining the best technical means to accomplish the objectives.

The cost for those programs can be very expensive, especially when legal issues may be involved, and live translators will still be needed.

The bill appropriates funds to establish one full-time (1.00 FTE) permanent program manager position to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Service. Our recommended budget is \$100,000 as it will be challenging to find someone with technical, project management, policy and subject matter expertise.

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



**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF S.B. 2782, SD2 RELATED TO
ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

To: Committee on Higher Education and Technology, Chairs Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice-Chair Jeanne Kapela, and members of the Committee

Committee on Labor and Government, Chair Scot Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett Andrew Takuya, and Members of the Committee

From: The Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights
Co-Chairs Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman

The Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights works to achieve equity, justice, inclusion, uphold civil rights, and eliminate discrimination. We stand in **Strong Support of S.B. 2782, SD2 with a suggested amendment to make this a permanent position.**

This measure proposes that the Office of Language Access and the Office of Enterprise Technology Services develop multilingual accessibility standards to provide technical guidance to state entities required to provide vital information to limited English proficient (LEP) persons under state and federal law.

By way of example, technical guidance could advise state entities to display language access links in the upper right corner of the agency's English website or a prominent location on the landing page. These links may, for example, steer LEP visitors seeking information to telephonic interpreters, provide notice that language assistance is available at no cost, and/or link the visitor to relevant translated information. Currently, language access information may be buried at the bottom of a state entity's landing page and remain inaccessible to the LEP visitor.

The 2019 State of Hawai'i Data Book reports Hawai'i's total population of persons five years of age or older at 1,331,641. Within this population 348,130 or one in four persons report speaking a language other than English at home. Of this cohort, one in nine Hawai'i residents or 161,055 persons is limited English proficient (LEP). The top languages spoken by LEP Hawai'i residents are Ilocano, Tagalog, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiian, Korean, Samoan, Vietnamese, Chuukese, and Marshallese. Hawai'i ranks sixth in the nation with the highest percentage of LEP persons.

An array of federal and Hawai'i laws, regulations, and legal decisions require recipients of federal or state funding to translate vital documents and provide digital access to LEP persons seeking access to federal or state-funded services. Federal authorities include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1966, Executive Order No. 13166 signed by President Clinton in 2000, Chapter 321C Hawaii Revised Statutes, and *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

Despite the clear mandate to provide accessible services for LEP persons, Hawai'i has been repeatedly cited by the federal court, federal offices for civil rights, and the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission for its failure to provide language-accessible services.¹

This bill offers state entities a path forward by providing clear technical guidance related to public access to vital information and documents and would standardize performance criteria and technical requirements across the State's enterprise technology systems.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Hawai'i Department of Human Services, Consent Decree, Department of Health and Human Services (2008); Hawai'i Office of Elections, United States District Court for the District of Hawai'i, Settlement Agreement (2010); Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Settlement Agreement (2014); 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, Department of Justice (2015); Hawai'i Public Housing Authority, Settlement Agreement, Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (2016), Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Settlement Agreement (2022), and a pending action filed by the National Health Law Program against the Hawai'i Department of Health.

To: House Committees on Higher Education & Technology and on Labor & Government Operations
Re: **SB 2782 SD2 – Relating to Electronic Information Technology**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 13, 2024, 2:00 PM

Dear Chairs Perruso and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Kapela and Garrett, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 2782 SD2**. This bill requires the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop multilingual accessibility standards and appropriates funds to establish one full-time position to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services.

During the pandemic, non-profit organizations like ours worked hard to help limited English proficiency (LEP) families in Hawai'i access the federal pandemic relief benefits that they were qualified for. While working on this outreach, we learned that our state departments lack resources to provide meaningful language access for LEP families, and that the federal government and national advocacy organizations do not provide translations of key information¹ in many of the languages that are the most spoken by LEP families in Hawai'i² – such as Ilocano, Marshallese, Tongan, and Chuukese.

Unfortunately, our state more recently learned about the lack of federal resources to address the language needs of Hawai'i's residents last year in the aftermath of the Lahaina wildfires, causing them to miss out on essential assistance. According to the language services coordinator for FEMA, who coordinated language access response after both the Lahaina and Paradise, California, fires, "the diverse cultures of Maui and the fact that many people did not feel comfortable dealing with government agencies, made the response in Lahaina unique."³

As one of the states with the highest portion of foreign-born residents,⁴ combined with the lack of existing resources for translations of government documents and outreach materials into many of the languages that are spoken most here, Hawai'i needs to devote more resources to ensure language access to our government services than most other states do.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/translated-applications>

² Hawai'i Data Exchange Partnership, https://hawaiiidxp.org/quick_data/datastory/el

³ <https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/03/people-who-dont-speak-english-lost-money-and-help-in-lahaina-response/>

⁴ Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/312701/percentage-of-population-foreign-born-in-the-us-by-state/>



**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2782
RELATED TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair

Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 13, 2024

Dear Chairs Perruso and Matayoshi, Vice Chair Kapela and Garrett, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) **fully supports SB2782**, which requires the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop multilingual accessibility standards and appropriates funds to establish one full-time position to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services.

With its unique demographic composition, the Lahaina community faced specific challenges during the crisis due to language barriers. The statistics presented in the bill highlight the need for targeted measures, especially considering that thirty-two percent of Lahaina's residents are foreign-born, a statistically significant difference compared to the statewide average. Moreover, electronic information technology is rapidly replacing print media, emphasizing the importance of ensuring access to technology for all residents to participate fully in state programs, services, and activities.

Providing equal access to state services and information for individuals with limited English proficiency upholds fundamental fairness principles and fosters economic growth. When diverse communities can fully engage with state resources, it promotes entrepreneurship, workforce participation, and consumer spending, thereby benefiting the economy as a whole.

Appropriating funds to establish multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services also avoids costly miscommunications, legal disputes, and inefficiencies down the line. This proactive approach to inclusivity is morally right and fiscally prudent, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and thriving Hawai'i.

Additionally, SB2782 aligns with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or **national origin** in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Multilingual accessibility standards ensure compliance with Title VI



and equal access to state services and information for individuals with limited English proficiency.

HCIR defers to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services on multilingual accessibility standards, but here is an example of one that could be implemented:



Here is a screenshot of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations homepage that shows an example of a multilingual accessibility standard that incorporates a language selection option and information on how to access information shown on the website in a different language. Having something like a language selection page, which is easy to

find, is crucial for individuals with limited English proficiency. It provides them with a clear and accessible way to navigate to content in their preferred language, ensuring that they can access important information and services without barriers.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Maria Rallojaj

Policy and Communications Coordinator



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2782_SD2 - RELATED TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

House Higher Education & Technology Committee

Amy A. Perruso, Chair

Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

House Labor & Government Operations Committee

Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 13, 2024 | Conference Room 309 | Letter Date: March 12, 2024

Dear HET Chair Perruso and Vice Chair Kapela, LGO Chair Matayoshi, and Vice Chair Garrett, and Committee Members:

We are writing to urge support and passage of SB2782 which will appropriate funds to establish a new full-time position to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS). We are gratified to see that the bill has been forwarded from the Senate to the House, and we encourage you to continue its progress through to final enactment.

At The Legal Clinic, a nonprofit organization that provides no-cost legal services on immigration matters to low-income Hawai'i residents, we come into regular contact with immigrants who speak little or no English. Our staff make use of qualified translators and interpreters to ensure that clients understand all the details of their immigration status, court cases, and government requirements. We make use of online translation services, multilingual posts and community-based individuals able to communicate in different languages with constituents.

State agencies must also update online services to be accessible to Hawai'i residents whose first language (and sometimes, only language) is other than English. We have seen with our own clients that limited proficiency in English can be a prohibitive barrier to gaining access to government services for which they are eligible, including through computerized applications. The Covid crisis, for instance, brought particular attention to the problems of unemployed non-English-speaking residents in registering for and collecting unemployment benefits, SNAP food coupons, and other needed government assistance. The ongoing crisis in the aftermath of the Maui fires has also brought attention to the dire need for multilingual service availability.

People who are not proficient in English should not be penalized by missing out on government information and aids to which they are entitled as residents of Hawai'i. All members of the community should be able to learn about benefits, programs, educational and training opportunities, events, legislative agendas, housing opportunities, and all manner of government advisories and updates.

Nearly one in five residents in Hawai'i is foreign-born. According to statistics from the State's own Bureau of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (2016 report), 84% of foreign-born Hawai'i residents speak another language in their homes. Improved language access is a broad goal and federal mandate that has already been acknowledged in State government, but little implemented. SB2782 offers an opportunity for these Committees to be in the forefront of efforts in Hawai'i to address language barriers, and to ensure that those who are not proficient in English can still access functions and information related to state government. The security and well-being of all our state's residents will benefit.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to the successful final passage and implementation of SB2782!

Respectfully,

Bettina Mok
Executive Director
director@tlchawaii.org

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2782
RELATED TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair

Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 13, 2024

Dear Chairs Perruso and Matayoshi, Vice Chair Kapela and Garrett, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of SB2782, which requires the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop multilingual accessibility standards and appropriates funds to establish one full-time position to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services.

With its unique demographic composition, the Lahaina community faced specific challenges during the crisis due to language barriers. The statistics presented in the bill highlight the need for targeted measures, especially considering that thirty-two percent of Lahaina's residents are foreign-born, a statistically significant difference compared to the statewide average. Moreover, electronic information technology is rapidly replacing print media, emphasizing the importance of ensuring access to technology for all residents to participate fully in state programs, services, and activities.

After the fires many residents fell through cracks because they did not understand the plethora of information available or they could not access it. Every day is full of disastrous possibilities and this bill would create accessibility. It is important that we learn from our mistakes and create change for a better future. Please consider passing this important bill for our community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB2782!

Thank you for your support and consideration,
Genesis Gil

SB-2782-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 1:59:52 PM

Testimony for HET on 3/13/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
AnnDionne Selestin	Roots Reborn	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair

Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 13, 2024

Dear Chairs Perruso and Matayoshi, Vice Chair Kapela and Garrett, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of SB2782, which requires the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop multilingual accessibility standards and appropriates funds to establish one full-time position to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services.

With its unique demographic composition, the Lahaina community faced specific challenges during the crisis due to language barriers. The statistics presented in the bill highlight the need for targeted measures, especially considering that thirty-two percent of

Lahaina's residents are foreign-born, a statistically significant difference compared to the statewide average. Moreover, electronic information technology is rapidly replacing print media, emphasizing the importance of ensuring access to technology for all residents to participate fully in state programs, services, and activities.

Living here on Maui , as a Pohnpeian I can testify the hardships our people went through during the Lahaina wildfires. Understanding resources, trying to voice out what we need, and so much more. Working with the COFA community I see the struggles first hand, when trying to get help . We, micronesians make up a sizeable share of the population here in Hawai'i , and need more help.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB2782!

Thank you for your support and consideration,

AnnDionne Selestin

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2782
RELATED TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY**
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 13, 2024

Dear Chairs Representative Peruso and Vice Chair Kapela and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of SB2782, which requires the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop multilingual accessibility standards and appropriates funds to establish one full-time position to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services.

With its unique demographic composition, the Lahaina community faced specific challenges during the crisis due to language barriers. The statistics presented in the bill highlight the need for targeted measures, especially considering that thirty-two percent of Lahaina's residents are foreign-born, a statistically significant difference compared to the statewide average. Moreover, electronic information technology is rapidly replacing print media, emphasizing the importance of ensuring access to technology for all residents to participate fully in state programs, services, and activities.

Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Center realized during the Pandemic that our COFA community and other Pacific Island communities were not able to receive information on a timely basis. Again, during the Maui Fires we find ourselves sending interpreters from Oahu to Maui to help the COFA limited English impacted by this disaster. This bill can further improve the access to communication in language through technology. We support this bill and ask for your consideration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB2782!

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Barbara Tom, Director

Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center
94-420 Farrington Hwy
Waipahu, HI 96797
Barbara.yukie@gmail.com

SB-2782-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 11:13:45 PM

Testimony for HET on 3/13/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Perruso and Matayoshi, Vice Chair Kapela and Garrett, and Members of the Committees,

As a public health professional and concerned citizen, I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2782 SD2, which requires the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop multilingual accessibility standards and appropriates funds to establish one full-time position to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services.

With its unique demographic composition, the Lahaina community faced specific challenges during the crisis due to language barriers. The statistics presented in the bill highlight the need for targeted measures, especially considering that thirty-two percent of Lahaina's residents are foreign-born, a statistically significant difference compared to the statewide average. Moreover, electronic information technology is rapidly replacing print media, emphasizing the importance of ensuring access to technology for all residents to participate fully in state programs, services, and activities.

Mahalo for considering this important bill.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

SB-2782-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 11:24:44 PM

Testimony for HET on 3/13/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and members of the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology, and Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2782 SD2. Language access has always been critical for our people but often under-resourced and not prioritized.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2782
RELATED TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Hearing Date: March 13, 2024

Dear Chairs Perruso and Matayoshi, Vice Chair Kapela and Garrett, and Members of the Committees,

I strongly **support SB2782**, which requires the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop multilingual accessibility standards. The bill also includes funds to establish one full-time position within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services to develop multilingual accessibility standards. As a first-generation immigrant, with many of my family members also being first-generation and having limited English proficiency, I believe this bill is crucial for ensuring equal access to technology for people like my family members and all individuals, regardless of their language abilities.

During the pandemic, I worked at a restaurant where many of my coworkers, predominantly immigrants who had arrived in the United States within the last five years, suddenly found themselves unemployed. Simultaneously, many of my family members were in the same predicament. Unfortunately, most were unaware of their eligibility for unemployment benefits and other assistance. Compounding this issue, crucial information on unemployment, food assistance, and updates on the situation were only accessible in English on the State websites. I took it upon myself to educate them about the available resources and guide them through the application process. I assisted them with navigating the online system, understanding their claims, and providing ongoing support. This proactive intervention proved crucial in preventing financial insecurity and helping them stay afloat during uncertain times.

After the Lahaina fire, I found myself again interpreting for my affected family members so that they could access the resources and assistance they needed. The dissemination of crucial information and updates was only available in English, creating significant barriers for our LEP communities. I supported my family members in navigating public shelters, accessing resources, and completing the FEMA Individual Assistance Program (IHP) application, all while keeping them informed about important developments regarding the fire.

This experience underscores the pressing need for our state websites to be equitably accessible for every community. In conclusion, I have seen firsthand how language barriers can hinder access to crucial resources and services. I firmly believe this bill is a step in the right direction toward creating a more welcoming and inclusive environment for immigrants. I urge you to support this vital piece of legislation and help pave the way for a more equitable future.

Thank you for your support and consideration,
Maria Rallojay

SB-2782-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 8:37:49 AM

Testimony for HET on 3/13/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liza Ryan Gill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2782

RELATED TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair

Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 13, 2024

Dear Chairs Perruso and Matayoshi, Vice Chair Kapela and Garrett, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of SB2782, which requires the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop multilingual accessibility standards and appropriates funds to establish one full-time position to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services.

With its unique demographic composition, the Lahaina community faced specific challenges during the crisis due to language barriers. The statistics presented in the bill highlight the need for targeted measures, especially considering that thirty-two percent of Lahaina's residents are foreign-born, a statistically significant difference compared to the statewide average. Moreover, electronic information technology is rapidly replacing print media, emphasizing the importance of ensuring access to technology for all residents to participate fully in state programs, services, and activities.

As a long-time advocate for immigrant rights, I have seen how critical it is to ensure that vital information and services are in the languages of the folks that need them. The Maui fires have only further demonstrated the life and death nature of understandable warnings and accessible information. If we do not move forward on updating our websites, we will continue to find ourselves in the same situation that happened during COVID and the fires. We know what the lessons are, its times to put our hard won learning into practice.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB2782!

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Liza Ryan Gill

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