

**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS**

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In reply, please refer to:  
File: 24-009

**Testimony in Support of SB 2782 SD1  
RELATING TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing Date: 2/28/2024

Room Number: Conf. Room 211 &  
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 and offers the following comments.

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.

15 Hawaii is one of the most culturally diverse states and has one of the highest proportions of non-  
16 English speakers in the nation. Many of these non-English speakers are immigrants and migrants  
17 with limited English proficiency (LEP). According to the 2018-2022 American Community

1 Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, it is estimated that 25.73%, or  
2 351,542, of Hawaii's residents aged 5 years and older speak a language other than English at  
3 home. Of these, 150,743, or 11.06%, indicated that they speak English 'less than very well.'

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

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

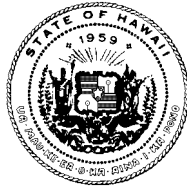
13 The strategic use of digital tools and resources is crucial for enhancing language access for  
14 persons with LEP. Providing persons with LEP with easy-to-find government digital information  
15 could encourage their participation in government services, programs, and activities.

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

18 Although OLA does not have the technical expertise in Information Technology (IT), this  
19 measure will allow OLA to work closely with other partners to further improve language access  
20 in our state government. If the measure is passed, OLA will collaborate with ETS in providing  
21 our expertise in the area of language access to support the creation of the standard.

22 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

February 24, 2024

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2782 SD1 – RELATING TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.**

Hearing: February 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m.  
Conference Room 211, 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 to develop multilingual accessibility standards. Appropriates funds to establish one full-time position (1.0 FTE) to develop multilingual accessibility standards within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. Takes effect 7/1/2050. (SD1)

The Committee on Labor and Technology 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.

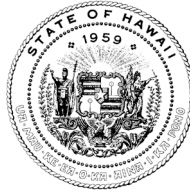
DHS appreciates the Legislature's investment in supporting the development of multilingual accessibility standards for the State to improve language access needs for Hawaii's multigenerational and ethnically diverse residents. Developing the statewide capability to

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**

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ETS.HAWAII.GOV

Written Testimony of  
**DOUGLAS MURDOCK**  
Chief Information Officer  
Enterprise Technology Services

Before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2024

**SENATE BILL 2782 SD1**  
**RELATING TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki 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 SD1 RELATED TO  
ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

To: Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki, and Members of the  
Committee on Ways and Means

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 SD1**.

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 reports 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

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<sup>1</sup> [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: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Re: **SB 2782 SD1 – Relating to Electronic Information Technology**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
February 28, 2024, 10:01 AM

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 2782 SD1**. 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. We focused mostly on outreach to parents who qualify for Pandemic EBT (food purchasing funds for low-income keiki and their families) and the enhanced Child Tax Credit.

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 documents<sup>1</sup> in many of the languages that are the most spoken by LEP families in Hawai'i<sup>2</sup> – such as Ilocano, Marshallese, and Chuukese.

As one of the states with the highest portion of foreign-born residents,<sup>3</sup> 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. That's why this bill so important.

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

Thank you,

Nicole Woo  
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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

<sup>2</sup> Hawai'i Data Exchange Partnership, [https://hawaiiidxp.org/quick\\_data/datastory/el](https://hawaiiidxp.org/quick_data/datastory/el)

<sup>3</sup> Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/312701/percentage-of-population-foreign-born-in-the-us-by-state/>



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. 2782 RELATED TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Hearing Date: February 28, 2024 | Conference Room 211 | Letter Date: February 26, 2024

The Legal Clinic, a nonprofit organization that provides free immigration legal services for low-income Hawai'i residents, stands in **Strong Support of S.B. 2782**.

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) residents of Hawai'i.

Numerous federal and state laws and rulings require recipients of federal or state funding to translate information for 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).

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. Many do not start out speaking English, and while many become proficient in time, there may be years in which they struggle to understand the dominant language around them. The top languages spoken by LEP Hawai'i residents are Ilocano, Tagalog, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiian, Korean, Samoan, Vietnamese, Chuukese, and Marshallese.

The recent Covid19 and Maui fire disasters made it painfully clear that the State was not doing enough to post multi-lingual alerts, resources, and other information online that could have offered critical relief and access to benefits for thousands of our state's residents.

SB2782 offers an opportunity for this Committee to help the State course correct, and to ensure a systematic and planned approach to language access across Hawai'i's enterprise technology systems. The safety and security of all of our state's residents will benefit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bettina Mok  
Executive Director  
director@tlchawaii.org



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

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 28, 2024

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) fully supports SB2782, which requires the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop multilingual accessibility standards and appropriate 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 Rallojay

Policy and Communications Coordinator



## COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

### Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Support: SB 2782

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 10:01 a.m. Conference Room 221

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

HAPA is testifying in support of SB 2782, 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.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB 2782 SD1!

Thank you for your support and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is positioned above the typed name.

Anne Frederick  
Executive Director

**SB-2782-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 7:38:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2782 SD1. Language access is critical for our people.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**SB-2782-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 10:55:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2782  
RELATED TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 28, 2024

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

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.

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

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō‘ili‘ili, O‘ahu

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2782  
RELATED TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

Hearing Date: February 28, 2024

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

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 Rallojaj



**SB-2782-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 7:54:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joel Montoya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2787, currently under consideration in the Hawai'i Legislature. Like, I am well aware of the pressing issues facing our community and I believe that SB 2787 presents a crucial step to address these challenges.

The provisions outlined in SB 2787 align with supporting the strengthening of our immigrant community, and I firmly believe that this legislation will have a positive impact on the recovery of our community both emotionally and economically. The thoughtful approach taken in drafting SB 2787 demonstrates a commitment with the well-being of our community and the improvement of our state.

I urge you to support and pass SB 2787 for the betterment of Hawai'i. The positive effects of this legislation will undoubtedly contribute to the betterment of our community and I am confident that its implementation will lead to positive changes.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. I trust you will weigh the benefits of SB 2787 and make a decision that aligns with the best interests of our community and the state of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Joel Montoya

**SB-2782-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 8:24:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and WAM Committee Members,

As a public health professional and concerned citizen, I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2782 SD1, 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-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:51:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Austin Haleyalpiy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support bill SB2782 as it is an important step to creating equitable access to information everyone should be able to access. The COVID pandemic and the Lahaina fires are perfect cases where language access was not prioritized by the state in their emergency responses. A lot of grassroots community organizations carried the load in helping disseminate information by creating videos in language, translating flyers, interpreting, and etc. This bill will hopefully streamline the process to where the state can take on more of the burden by actively seeking to address language access with all information that goes out. If this were to happen, emergency situations would be easier to navigate. Language access in itself is a **right for everyone**. It is *not* something people have to work for or should have to pay for. For every emergency situation that has occurred, language access has always been a top issue. It is time that the state addresses it and not wait for more pandemics or natural disasters to occur.

Mahalo