

**Sunshine Choe**

**Language Access Advisory Council Nominee - Additional Information**

**1. Why do you wish to be a member of the Language Access Advisory Council?**

I wish to be a member of the Language Access Advisory Council on behalf of state workers who provide essential language access on a daily basis. As a state worker, I have personally experienced how providing quality language access ensures that all residents of Hawai'i are able to more fully participate in government programs and receive information in a meaningful way.

**2. What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the Language Access Advisory Council?**

I see the role of each member of the Language Access Advisory Council as providing unique advice and guidance to the Office of Language Access based on his or her background and experience with the limited English-speaking population. The Language Access Advisory Council members also assist the Office of Language Access in holding agencies and other state entities accountable in providing meaningful services by pointing out inadequacies in current practices.

**3. Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Language Access Advisory Council member, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, and knowledge that would aid you as a member of the Board.**

As a nominee for the Language Access Advisory Council representing State Government, I believe my background gives me insight in both the creation and implementation of language access plans. As a state worker in the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, I received training on working with those who self-identify as speaking limited English. I was trained on how to offer and use telephonic interpretation systems, and was able to see the difference it made in the level of communication the department was able to provide. As the current public services director for the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, I was appointed to be the office language access coordinator. I work with our office staff to provide them training and guidance in serving the limited English-speaking community.

**4. What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?**

I hope to provide pragmatic advice to the Office of Language Access. I believe it is important to have the perspective of state workers within the council as we are the individuals who provide direct language services. I will provide this voice within the council.

**5. Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will benefit the Language Access Advisory Council.**

I am kind, resourceful and hard-working.

I believe that kindness is an underrated value in providing language access. Establishing and implementing language access guidelines that have everyone's best interest at heart ensures that we do not merely follow the guidelines for their own sake, but consistently re-evaluate to determine if they are truly helping those who most need access.

My ability to be resourceful allows me to look outside current practices and find new ways of accomplishing the goals of the Office of Language Access. I am also able to evaluate current language access guidelines and methods and make recommendations to ensure they are both effective and sustainable.

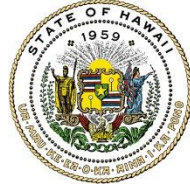
Finally, as a hard-working individual, I prefer not to stop at "good enough," but intended to push towards better language access and ultimately, a stronger, more knowledgeable state that has access to all available programs regardless of language ability.

**6. Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a member.**

When I was hired at the office of the Lieutenant Governor. I was appointed as our office Language Access Coordinator. I applied the skills and knowledge I had received at the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to re-write our office Language Access Plan to ensure that our office was up-to-date with current Office of Language Access guidelines. The experience of revising our language access plan gave me insight into the laws that provide for language access and how to evaluate services available for assistance in interpretation and translation.

**7. Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Language Access Advisory Council? How would you overcome conflicts of interest?**

As both a member of the Language Access Council and a state Language Access Coordinator, I recognize that there may be a conflict of interest when I am both advising on guidelines and directly implementing them. This could create a situation where my recommendations are influenced by my responsibilities in carrying out the language access plan. I would be sure to point out any advice given that might impact my office or my role as the Language Access Coordinator directly.



**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
*Ke Ke'ena O Ka Hope Kia'āina*

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, State of Hawaii  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 19, 2025

Testimony on  
**GM 646 – SUBMITTING FOR THE CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE  
LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COUNCIL, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,  
SUNSHINE CHOE, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029.**

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to offer my strong support for the confirmation of Sunshine Choe to the Language Access Advisory Council. She has demonstrated a determined commitment to ensure that language access is prioritized in the services our office provides, making her an ideal candidate for this important role.

As a key member of my office, Sunshine has been instrumental in improving accessibility for constituents and visitors from all communities in our state. She has led an initiative that directly aligns with the core mission of the Language Access Advisory Council—fostering communication and breaking down language barriers.

Under Sunshine's leadership, the office implemented a comprehensive Language Access Plan that not only ensures compliance with current state laws but also elevates the level of service we can provide. She proactively sought training opportunities for staff and implemented telephonic interpretation and translation services, equipping our personnel with skills to work effectively with interpreters and address potential language barriers and challenges for individuals who sought assistance and services from our office.

For these reasons, I believe Sunshine will be an invaluable asset to the Language Access Advisory council. I respectfully urge this committee to confirm her appointment. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support Sunshine Choe.



Statement Before The  
Wednesday, February 19, 2025  
1:00 PM  
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

in consideration of  
**GM646**

**SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE LANGUAGE ACCESS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, SUNSHINE CHOE,  
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029.**

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair AQUINO and Members of the  
Senate Health and Human Services Committee

The Legal Clinic (TLC) supports Gubernatorial Nominee, Sunshine Choe, for the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC).

TLC is a Hawai'i nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. TLC is a direct legal services provider, representing those in Hawai'i who meet income eligibility guidelines without regard to immigration status, national origin, ethnic background, race, religion, ideology, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability. TLC works alongside immigrants so they can attain authorization to work and live with dignity, reunite with their families after years of separation and escape horrific violence to find refuge in the United States. TLC recognizes that every person needs and deserves to feel a sense of trust, welcome, and belonging.

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Hawai'i is the most diverse state in the nation.<sup>1</sup> In 2023, Hawai'i had about 256,000 immigrants, which is approx. 18% of the State population.<sup>2</sup> The top countries of origin for immigrants were the Philippines (45 percent of immigrants), China (9 percent), Japan (8 percent), Korea (6 percent), and the Pacific Island Nations (4 percent).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/567625-hawaii-california-and-nevada-are-most-diverse-states-in-the-us-census/> (retrieved 1/14/2025).

<sup>2</sup> See <https://usafacts.org/answers/how-many-immigrants-are-in-the-us/state/hawaii/> and <https://data.census.gov/profile/Hawaii?g=040XX00US15#populations-and-people> (retrieved 1/14/2025).

<sup>3</sup> See [https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/immigrants\\_in\\_hawaii.pdf](https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/immigrants_in_hawaii.pdf) (retrieved 1/14/2025).

There are between 41,000 -50,500 undocumented immigrants in Hawai'i.<sup>4</sup> Hawaii is the only state where undocumented women (55%) outnumber men.<sup>5</sup>

The work of the LAAC -- providing input on: implementation and compliance with Hawai'i's language access laws; the quality of oral and written language services provided under the law; and the adequacy of a state agency or covered entity's dissemination and training of its employees likely to have contact with Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons, its policies and procedures for language services, its competency in working effectively with in-person and telephone interpreters, and its understanding of the dynamics of interpretation between clients, providers, and interpreters<sup>6</sup> -- is integral to the work of TLC. TLC cannot fully and effectively support our immigrant and migrant communities without LAAC.

Thus, TLC supports Gubernatorial Nominee, Sunshine Choe, for LAAC. If you have questions of me, please contact me at [sma@tlchawaii.org](mailto:sma@tlchawaii.org).

Very respectfully yours,

*Sandy Ma*

Sandy Ma  
Community & Policy Advocate  
The Legal Clinic

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<sup>44</sup> See <https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/12/data-dive-hawai%CA%BBi-deportation-cases-hit-quarter-century-high/> (retrieved 1/14/2025).

<sup>55</sup> See <https://mchb.tvisdata.hrsa.gov/Narratives/Overview/a0ac94c0-8538-417e-85c9-da6ac5c06603> (retrieved 1/14/2025).

<sup>6</sup> See <https://health.hawaii.gov/ola/meet-the-council/> (retrieved 2/18/2025).

**GM-646**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 12:55:28 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/19/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
amy agbayani	Testifying for hawaii friends of civil rights	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I strongly support SUNSHINE CHOE's nomination to the OLA board. I have worked on language access policy and programs for decades and know we need her on OLA board. Please approve her nomination to OLA because she has the expertise, experinece and values that supports OLA's mission.

Amy Agbayani