

Presentation Before the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

October 26, 2007

Sister Earnest Chung, M.M., M.P.H.

Language Access Advisory Council

Chair Taniguchi, members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, thank you for this opportunity to present background about myself in your consideration of my confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC).

I was born in China, grew up in Hong Kong, and have been a resident of Hawai'i since 1970 when my religious community assigned me here to teach. I am a naturalized U.S. citizen. I received a Master's in Public Health, with emphasis on International Public Health from the University of Hawai'i Manoa in 1984.

I have successfully held a variety of increasingly responsible social service, administrative, community, and appointive positions, including my current position as Social Policy Director for Catholic Charities Hawai'i. This position provides me the opportunity for contact with various populations (elderly, immigrants, refugees, the homeless, domestic violence survivors and perpetrators, etc.) that are vitally interested in gaining full access to essential services.

My interest in working with limited English speaking persons began in 1973 when, as a Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker and later as a Consumer Education Specialist in a Title III funded Older Americans Act program, I worked with many limited English speaking older adults, first in Kalihi-Palama & Chinatown and later throughout Oahu. In the late 1970's, I served on a court-appointed committee to oversee the federal civil rights lawsuit against the Department of Health (DOH), known as Mangrobang vs. Yuen, in DOH's mandated efforts to provide equal access for mental health services to limited English speakers. I have remained interested and active within the community on language access issues since then.

A position on the Language Access Advisory Council would give me the opportunity to work in support of Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons gaining access to all state resources through systemic strategies and remedies via the Office of Language Office (OLA). These services enable LEP persons to participate fully and contribute to the life of Hawai'i's community as parents, workers, and citizens. I would be a LAAC team member that hopes to make the State of Hawai'i one of the top tier of all states in providing equal access for all citizens. I have the skills, knowledge, experience, and certainly the commitment to contribute to the success of OLA. My previous service on a court-appointed committee has provided me with insights into the complexity of the issue and the various stakeholders that will serve me well in contributing to the success of OLA. If allowed to serve, I will bring experience, great enthusiasm, and commitment.

I cannot foresee any possible conflict of interest that may arise from my service on LAAC. Should such a conflict arise, I will recuse myself in the voting process.

I welcome the challenges ahead. My personality, background, education, and professional experiences have gifted me with the tools to contribute to the success of OLA. I request that you support my nomination to the Language Access Advisory Council.

Department of Labor and Industrial Relations  
Office of Language Access

Testimony in Support of  
Language Access Advisory Council Nominee:  
SISTER EARNEST CHUNG

Good morning, Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor :

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Serafin "Jun" Colmenares, and I am the Executive Director with the Office of Language Access (OLA). The Office of Language Access strongly supports the appointment of SISTER EARNEST CHUNG to the Language Access Advisory Council.

Sister Earnest Chung has dedicated over 30 years of her life to ministry for the elderly and has first hand knowledge of the needs and issues faced by Hawaii's immigrant communities. Since 1973 when she began her ministry with Catholic Charities, Sister Earnest has served the communities in Hawaii, including as a bilingual outreach worker, consumer education specialist, and community services advisor. In 1984, Sister Earnest earned her Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of Hawaii and became the first Executive Director of Catholic Charities Elderly Services the same year.

As the Executive Director of Catholic Charities Immigrant Services (1995) and Social Policy Director for Catholic Charities Hawaii (1999), Sister Earnest gained experience coordinating the advocacy efforts of Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH). As a result, Sister Earnest is aware of the much needed services for and issues faced by low-income families, isolated elderly immigrants and refugees, and people and families who are homeless. More importantly, Sister Earnest has hands on experience in working with the immigrant communities of Hawaii, which are the communities who often face language access issues when seeking government services.

Today, Sister Earnest continues her endeavors to support and advocate for the elderly immigrant communities in Hawaii and is very active in the Chinese community. She is an ardent supporter of immigrant and language access rights.

For these reasons, the Office of Language Access strongly supports the appointment of SISTER EARNEST CHUNG to the Language Access Advisory Council.

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**From:** willikina B [willikinab@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 25, 2007 8:14 AM  
**To:** Sen. Brian Taniguchi  
**Subject:** Testimoy

October 24, 2007

Senator Brian T. Taniguchi  
Chair, Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Dear Senator Taniguchi,

We write today in support of the nomination of Sister Earnest Chung to the Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC) with a term to expire on June 30, 2010. We know Sister Earnest since August 1970 when she was first assigned to Maryknoll Sisters Mission in Hawaii. We testify to her character and to her sound judgment.

Sr. Earnest's personal background and professional experience in Hawaii make her an ideal candidate to serve on LAAC. She herself is an immigrant and naturalized U.S. citizen, a veteran Bilingual Outreach Worker among senior citizens in the Kalihi-Palama area, a University of Hawaii School of Public Health graduate, a former Executive Director of Catholic Charities Immigrant Services, and currently the Social Policy Director for Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Throughout her professional life, for over thirty years, all who know her well can testify to her advocacy for access to services for those whose first language is other than English. She has been among those who have labored long and hard to make a difference in the lives of those who live and work here. While the creation of the Office for Language Access is in itself a milestone in the effort to ensure that no one is denied services because of language barriers, much remains to be done.

In Sr. Earnest, LAAC would find - and benefit from - her intimate knowledge of the history, the challenges, and the players within the state around this issue. Sr. Earnest is eminently practical, trustworthy, and hard working. We fully endorse her character, her experience, and the skills she brings to serve the people of Hawaii, especially in the arena of access to services.

Sincerely,

Sister Bitrina Kirway

Maryknoll Sisters

87-204 Holomalia Place Nanakuli HI  
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E-mail [wilikinab@yahoo.com](mailto:wilikinab@yahoo.com)

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**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

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October 25, 2007

To: The Honorable Brian Taniguchi, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Date: October 26, 2007  
Time: 9:00 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 229, State Capitol

From: Darwin L.D. Ching, Interim Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

**RE: SISTER EARNEST CHUNG**  
***Language Access Advisory Council ("OLA")***

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations ("Department") strongly supports the confirmation of SISTER EARNEST CHUNG.

Sister Earnest Chung has over 30 years of experience addressing the needs and issues faced by Hawaii's immigrant communities. Sister Earnest's activities include: bilingual outreach worker, consumer education specialist, and community services advisor. In 1984, Sister Earnest earned her Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of Hawaii and became the first Executive Director of Catholic Charities Elderly Services the same year.

As the Executive Director of Catholic Charities Immigrant Services (1995) and Social Policy Director for Catholic Charities Hawaii (1999), Sister Earnest gained experience coordinating the advocacy efforts of Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH). As a result, Sister Earnest is aware of the much needed services for and issues faced by low-income families, isolated elderly immigrants and refugees, and people and families who are homeless. More importantly, Sister Earnest has hands on experience in working with the immigrant communities of Hawaii, which are the communities who often face language access issues when seeking government services.

Today, Sister Earnest continues her endeavors to support and advocate for the elderly immigrant communities in Hawaii and is very active in the Chinese community. She is an ardent supporter of immigrant and language access rights.

In summary, SISTER EARNEST CHUNG is well-qualified and deserving of confirmation for the OLA.

**CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII**

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**To:** Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
Senator Clayton Hee, Vice-Chair

**From:** Stella M.Q. Wong, Vice President of Programs  
Catholic Charities Hawaii

**Date:** Friday, October 26, 2007

**RE:** **Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee Earnest Chung, for a term to expire 6/30/2010**

I strongly support the Confirmation of Sr. Earnest Chung as a member of the Language Access Advisory Council.

I have known Sr. Earnest Chung for over 20 years. Her passion has always been the immigrants of Hawai'i and making use they are treated fairly and have full access to the services that they are entitled to receive.

During her tenure as the Executive Director of Catholic Charities Elderly Services and later at Catholic Charities Immigrant Services, Sr. Earnest fought long and hard to make sure that language is not a barrier to services. The passage of the Language Access bill is something that she helped bring about.

There is no one more deserving who should be on this advisory council. Sr. Earnest Chung will continue to provide the state with knowledge and commitment to issues that will come before the Language Access Advisory Council. I fully support her confirmation. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



hawaii family forum

6301 Pali Highway  
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A joint legislative effort.



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Gm92/93

E-MAIL: testimony@capitol.hawaii.gov  
REGARDING: Senate JDL Committee  
HEARING DATE: October 26, 2007 @ 9:00 a.m.  
COPIES NECESSARY: 1 Copy

**DATE:** October 24, 2007

**TO:** Senate Committee on Judiciary & Labor  
The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
The Honorable Clayton Hee, Vice-Chair

**FROM:** Kelly M. Rosati, JD  
Executive Director, Hawaii Family Forum  
Director, Hawaii Catholic Conference

**RE: Support for (Earnest Chung)** for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council

Honorable Chair and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary & Labor, I am Kelly Rosati, representing both the Hawaii Family Forum and the Hawaii Catholic Conference. Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii. The Hawaii Catholic Conference, which is the public policy arm of the Roman Catholic Church in Hawaii, under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents over 230,000 Catholics in Hawaii.

Over the past several years, both organizations have had the pleasure of working with Sr. Earnest Chung. In that time, she has demonstrated both her commitment and her competence in improving the lives of immigrants in Hawaii. She has well over 20 years of experience with Catholic Charities including being the former executive director for both elderly and immigrant Services.

In addition, she has been instrumental in getting the new language access bill passed. She has a strong sense of broader public policy issues impacting our immigrant brothers and sisters. Her passionate advocacy has enabled her to provide practical assistance to those members of our community who struggle with language barriers.

As the current Social Policy Director Catholic Charities, Sr. Earnest is extremely qualified and experienced and will be a great asset to the Language Access Advisory Council.

**We urge your support for her confirmation.**