

Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Office of Language Access

Testimony in Support of
Language Access Advisory Council Nominee:
GERALD HISASHI OHTA

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

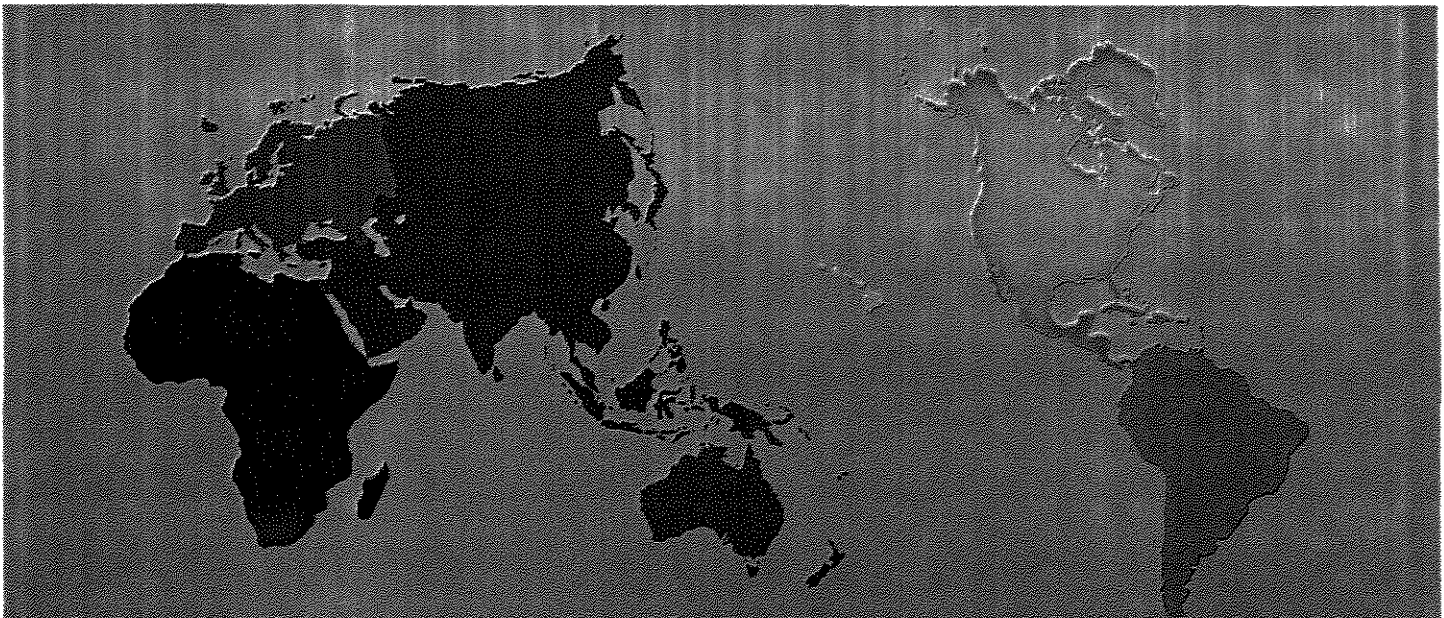
Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Serafin "Jun" Colmenares, and I am the Executive Director with the Office of Language Access (OLA). The Office of Language Access strongly supports the appointment of GERALD HISASHI OHTA to the Language Access Advisory Council.

Gerald Ohta has been a very strong proponent of language access. As a member of the Inter-Agency Council on Immigrant Services – Language Access Working Group, Mr. Ohta is knowledgeable of the issues faced by the limited English proficient population in Hawaii and recognizes the need to continue to work to improve and make accessible government programs and activities.

In addition, given his background working with schools and universities, community agencies, enforcement agencies, and public health agencies, Mr. Ohta brings a broad perspective to the Council as well as experience in working to make sure that the limited English speaking population is not denied essential government services. As the Affirmative Action Officer for the State of Hawaii, Department of Health, Mr. Ohta has first hand knowledge of the challenges state agencies face in complying with Hawaii's language access laws, His knowledge combined with Mr. Ohta's wealth of contacts with language access advocates and his experience in legislation, policy and standards, training and development, and distance learning will greatly benefit the Council.

Finally, as a member of the Council, Mr. Ohta has indicated an interest in finding ways to improve and systematize language access so all of Hawaii's residents will have the opportunities to know about and make choices about state programs and activities for which they qualify or have an interest.

For these reasons, the Office of Language Access believes that Mr. Ohta is a strong representative of state government and thus supports the appointment of GERALD HISASHI OHTA to the Language Access Advisory Council.



Gerald Ohta



Gerald Ohta
gerald.ohta@doh.hawaii.gov

Seeking Confirmation in 2007 Language Access Advisory Council

"Aloha! I am seeking your consideration for as the state government representative to the advisory council to the Office of Language Access (OLA). I have a broad perspective. I have worked with schools and universities, community, enforcement agencies and public health agencies. I have done a broad range of activities including legislation, policy and standards, training and development, distance learning, investigations, enforcement and consultation. Language access in a tight fiscal environment challenges us to use different approaches.

We must continue to work to improve and make accessible our programs and activities. The council must seek ways of engaging government staff and aiding OLA to improve and systematize language access so that all in Hawaii have opportunities to know about and to make choices about state programs and activities for which they may qualify or have an interest. Mahalo."

Current Positions and Activities:

- Affirmative Action Officer,
- State Distance Learning Coordinator-Hawai/National Steering Committee (PHFN-CDC),
- Health Alert Network Alternate-Hawaii (Public Health Preparedness for Bioterrorism-PHPRBOPHE),
- Refugee Health Coordinator,
- State Department of Human Resources Development Instructor - Unlawful Harassment and Reasonable Accommodation,
- Hawai Supreme Court Committee on Equality and Access to the Courts,
- Hawai Civil Rights Commission Committee on Diversity,
- Language Access Working Group, Inter-Agency Council on Immigrant Services
- Language Access Training Work Group, Ann E. Casey Foundation
- Interim Appointment, State Agency Representative, Language Access Advisory Council

American Public Health Association Affiliations:

- Affiliate Representative to the Governing Council- Hawaii;
- APHA Education Board;
- APHA Joint Policy Committee,
- APHA Committee on Affiliates Region IX Representative (and at-large in past),
- Health Administration Section (and Council in past);
- American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Caucus;
- Asian and Pacific Islander Caucus;
- Hawaii Public Health Association (33+ years including past President and Board).

Past Positions and Activities:

- A 2006 Top 50 High Tech Leader, Pacific Technology Foundation and Technology News Network
- Deputy, Governor's Affirmative Action Office;
- Instructor, Hawaii Institute for Management & Analysis in Government;
- Native Hawaiian Health Task Force, Founder;
- Hawaii State Coordinating Council on Deafness, Founder;
- Society for Public Health Education;
- Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women;
- American Association for Affirmative Action, Region IX Director;
- State Department of Health Manager of the Year & Nominee for State of Hawaii Manager of the Year;
- Training, Employee Relations & Safety Officer and Personnel Field Representative.



Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

References requested for confirmation of Gerald Hisashi Ohta
As member of the Language Access Advisory Council

Patricia McManaman, Executive Director
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Immigrant Rights and Public Interest Legal Center
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Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817
Phone: (808) 847-8828
pmcmanaman@naloio.org

James Perez
Inspector in Charge (retired)
Equal Opportunity Office
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Huntington Beach, CA 92646
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Ira Pollack
Regional Manager (retired)
c/o Michael Kruley, Regional Manager
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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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(415) 437-8310
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GM 9/1/98

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO,
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DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

**CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION OF
GERALD HISASHI OHTA
LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Testimony of Gerald Ohta
Interim Member, Language Access Advisory Council**

October 26, 2007

1 I respectfully ask for your support of my confirmation as a member to the Language Access
2 Advisory Council (LAAC). I currently serve as an interim appointee representing state agencies and as
3 vice-chair.

4 As Department of Health Affirmative Action Officer (AAO) and Language Access Coordinator,
5 and with the support and understanding of others, I believe I can be effective as a council member and as
6 the state agency representative.

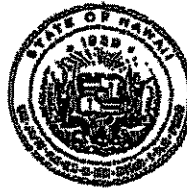
7 Just as I am on the initial LAAC, I was a founding member of the Hawaii State Coordinating
8 Council on Deafness. Many issues discussed by LAAC are similar to those faced by that council

9 I work daily with nondiscrimination issues included language access. In that function I have
0 drafted legislation, prepared testimony, testified before the legislature ranging from nondiscrimination in
1 employment and services to telehealth insurance issues. During my tenure, I have briefed departmental,
2 county, and other state personnel on issues related to unlawful harassment to language access.

3 I am active in the community and was part of the working group that wrote and supported the
4 Language Access statute. I kept my department apprised and drafted and presented testimony on its
5 behalf. If we all work together, positive change will happen. Thank you for this opportunity.

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LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

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Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

**CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION OF
GERALD HISASHI OHTA
LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D.
Director of Health**

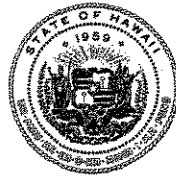
October 26, 2007

1 The Department of Health (DOH) strongly supports the nomination of Gerald H. Ohta as a
2 member to the Language Access Advisory Council.

3 As the Department of Health's Affirmative Action Officer (AAO) Mr. Ohta is exceedingly
4 qualified to participate as the state government representative. Mr. Ohta is particularly familiar with the
5 governmental, regulatory, and political landscape surrounding accessibility issues. He has been
6 involved in drafting legislation, developing policies and procedures, and conducted trainings in areas
7 such as unlawful harassment, civil rights and diversity, and language access. Mr. Ohta's appointments
8 throughout the community are notable, including participating as a member of the Language Access
9 Working Group for the Inter-Agency Council on Immigrant Services and as a Past-President of the
10 Hawaii Public Health Association. Within the halls of the DOH, Mr. Ohta provides leadership and
11 dedication to his responsibilities and true camaraderie and care toward his fellow department colleagues.
12 Mr. Ohta is an integral part of the Department of Health Ohana.

13 The Department of Health urges this committee to favorably consider the nomination of
14 Mr. Gerald Ohta.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**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: GERALD HISASHI OHTA
Language Access Advisory Council ("OLA")**

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations ("Department") strongly supports the confirmation of Mr. GERALD HISASHI OHTA.

Gerald Ohta has been a very strong proponent of language access. As a member of the Inter-Agency Council on Immigrant Services – Language Access Working Group, Mr. Ohta is knowledgeable of the issues faced by the limited English proficient population in Hawaii and recognizes the need to continue to work to improve and make accessible government programs and activities.

Further, given his background working with schools and universities, community agencies, enforcement agencies, and public health agencies, Mr. Ohta brings a broad perspective to the Council as well as experience in working to make sure that the limited English speaking population is not denied essential government services. As the Affirmative Action Officer for the State of Hawaii, Department of Health, Mr. Ohta has first hand knowledge of the challenges state agencies face in complying with Hawaii's language access laws.

Finally, Mr. Ohta's position as a state employee and experience in legislation, policy and standards, training and development qualifies Mr. Ohta as a representative of state government on the OLA.

In summary, Mr. GERALD HISASHI OHTA is well-qualified and deserving of confirmation for the OLA.