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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
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April 9, 2021

To: The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair,
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Date: Friday, April 9, 2021

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Via Videoconference

From: Anne Perreira-Eustaquio, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: H.C.R. No. 169 WORKING GROUP TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANTS AND INCREASE IMMIGRANT OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE CIVIC AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY.

Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee,

The department supports this measure that seeks to improve access to government services for immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities to make civic and economic contributions to the community. The DLIR notes that U.S. Department of Labor initially included the Bureaus of Immigration and Naturalization and the employment service directed seasonal farm workers to areas of labor shortage, establishing a Departmental tradition of aid to migrant farm workers. Hawaii's history is inextricably interlinked with immigration, especially with its early reliance on immigrant laborers from Asia and the Pacific in the sugar industry under the auspices of the Masters & Servants Act (SLH, 1850) and later the pineapple industry.

Over the years in successive waves of immigration, the sugar growers brought to Hawaii 46,000 Chinese, 180,000 Japanese, 126,000 Filipinos as well as Portuguese and Puerto Ricans, each one used generally to offset the bargaining power of its predecessor. Following the classic formula, the planters increased the labor supply as needed to decrease labor's demands.¹ Sugar and pineapple workers were paid by nationality to sow disunity and maintain the leverage of the Big Five over its labor force. Workers were able to organize through the formation of a multi-ethnic labor movement through the aid of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and played a large role in the Democratic Revolution of 1954. Organized labor laid the foundation for political change and forever changed Hawaii politically, economically, and socially.

Therefore, the DLIR supports this measure that seeks to support our contemporary immigrant workers in accessing government services and facilitate their civic and economic contributions to our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this vital matter.

¹ <https://www.hawaii.edu/uho/clear/home/Lhistory.html>

Testimony in SUPPORT of HCR 169

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANTS AND INCREASE IMMIGRANT OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE CIVIC AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY.

Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON LABOR, CULTURE, AND THE ARTS

Hearing Date: 4/9/2021

Room Number: 225

Chair Taniguchi and Vice-Chair Ihara,

The Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) SUPPORTS **HCR 169**, which directs the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a working group to ensure meaningful access to government services and increase opportunities for immigrants.

DLIR is uniquely-situated to establish this working group 1) because of the important services it administers, including Unemployment Insurance (UI) and 2) because the Office of Community Services (OCS) is an administratively-attached agency of DLIR whose statutorily-established mission includes serving immigrants.

Barriers to Access for Immigrants

First, DLIR services to the immigrant population are critical. Among Hawai'i's working population during the 2012-2016 period, 22% were born in foreign countries. Almost one fourth of foreign-born workers were found in Accommodation and Food Services (22.5%), followed by Retail Trade (12.8%,) and Health Care and Social Assistance (11.8%).¹ Moreover, In Hawai'i's labor force, 37% of all workers, 25 years and older, speak a language other than English at home.²

The COVID-19 pandemic emergency revealed the current gaps in the ability of all state agencies, including DLIR, to provide meaningful access to immigrants. For example, it is well documented that state agencies were unable to properly serve LEP communities during the pandemic.³ And although the COVID-19 emergency exposed these challenges with greater

¹ Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, Hawai'i's Working Population: An Analysis by Industry 2012-2016, (April 2018).

² Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, The State of Hawai'i Data Book 2018, Table 1.45 – Language Spoken at Home, by Educational Attainment and Employment Status: 2013-2017 (2018).

³ See, e.g., Anita Hofschneider, *Advocates: Lack of Interpreter Services at Unemployment Office is Illegal*, Civil Beat, July 7, 2020, at <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/07/advocates-lack-of-interpreter-services-at-unemployment-office-is-illegal/>.

clarity, they have long been a concern. Hawai'i has been cited repeatedly by the federal Department of Justice and the federal court for failure to ensure meaningful access to services by LEP persons.⁴ A close look at Hawai'i's linguistic diversity reveals that these shortcomings fail a large portion of our population. One out of four, or 329,827, of Hawai'i's residents speaks a language other than English at home. Of this group, 46% or 151,187 are LEP.⁵

In addition to language access, the myriad of federal immigration statuses and documents has created confusion among state agency employees and systems, leading to further barriers for immigrants. For example, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there initially was a barrier to COFA-status immigrants accessing Unemployment Insurance because the computer system did not allow for I-94 numbers.⁶ And finally, many groups of immigrants continue to face discrimination here in Hawai'i.⁷

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have heard numerous stories of immigrant families unable to access benefits and services that they were entitled to and, just like all working Hawai'i residents, had paid into. The state must do better for its immigrant residents.

Office of Community Services

The Office of Community Services (OCS), an administratively-attached agency to DLIR, was established by the Legislature in 1985 to assist low-income individuals and families, refugees, and immigrants so they can live healthier lives, achieve greater economic self-sufficiency, and increase their contributions to the state. OCS's focus and funding for immigrant and refugee communities has eroded over time, and OCS's current primary focus and funds are for low-income communities. OCS is responsible for numerous statewide programs and provides millions of federal and state dollars to low-income communities for food, health services, employment services, and more.⁸

⁴ Hawai'i Department of Human Services, Consent Decree (2008); Hawai'i Office of Elections, United States District Court for the District of Hawai'i, Settlement Agreement (2010); 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 (2015); Hawai'i Public Housing Authority, Settlement Agreement with the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (2016). Additionally, multiple language access complaints were filed in 2020 against the Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Unemployment Insurance Division for its failure to translate vital documents, including applications for Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), and its failure to provide interpreters. These complaints remain pending with the federal Department of Labor, Civil Rights Division.

⁵ Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, The State of Hawai'i Data Book 2018, Table 1.44 – Ranking of Selected Detailed Language Spoken at Home: 2014-2018, (2018).

⁶ Anita Hofschneider, *Hawaii Updates Unemployment Application to Include Pacific Migrants*, Civil Beat, April 14, 2020, at <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/04/hawaii-updates-unemployment-application-to-include-pacific-migrants/>.

⁷ Anita Hofschneider, *Report: Battling Discrimination Against Micronesians Requires Policy Changes*, Civil Beat, October 15, 2019, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2019/10/report-battling-discrimination-against-micronesians-requires-policy-changes/>

⁸ Here are just a few examples of OCS's staff portfolio:

Federal Food Programs. OCS works with the Hawai'i Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, the Food Basket, and others. OCS facilitates the delivery of free USDA food to hundreds of thousands of Hawai'i residents through

Even as OCS's services have already shifted away from a focus on immigrants because of their vast responsibilities, the Governor's original budget proposal would further debilitate OCS. It proposed the reduction of more than 50% of general funds and elimination of 4.5 positions (which equates to abolition of 5 positions). This would have severe impacts on the administration of both federal- and state-funded programs administered by OCS, and it would further marginalize immigrant services in our state.

As we head into the next chapter of the fight to end COVID-19 and recover economically, we will only be successful if services and opportunities include *all* of Hawai'i's residents, including immigrants. This resolution is an important step for that goal.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Catherine Chen, Co-chair, Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights

Liza Ryan Gill, Co-chair, Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and through two other federal food programs – the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

State-funded programs. In Fiscal Year 2020 OCS managed a portfolio of 92 state grants-in-aid totaling more than \$25.6 million, of which approximately \$23.8 million was for capital improvement projects and \$1.8 million was for operating grants. OCS also administers a state-funded employment services program that helps Hawai'i's low-income individuals and legal permanent residents gain employment skills, find, and retain jobs.

COVID-19 programs. OCS's existing federally funded programs received direct funding from the CARES Act. In addition, OCS administered CARES Act funds (appropriated from the Legislature) for food distribution. OCS staff are experienced and needed by the state to administer essential programs aimed to provide a social safety net to low-income, vulnerable, and disadvantaged communities during the COVID-19.



Testimony in support of HCR 169
Submitted by Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights,
Co-chairs: Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman

The text of HCR169 provides current information on the number of foreign-born persons (over 250,000), including 145,000 who are naturalized citizens; their participation in Hawaii's economy (40% of agricultural workers, 33% of tourism/hospitality workers and 23% of healthcare workers. The resolution also identified barriers many immigrants face (e.g. discrimination, cultural misunderstanding, language access to government information and services. Immigrants are our family, neighbors, co-workers, business owners and professionals. Recent immigrants and naturalized citizens need and deserve access to government services so they can fully participate and contribute to our community.

We thank the legislature for hearing this resolution and specially for establishing the Office of Community Service (OCS) in 1985 by consolidating "four anti-poverty agencies administering state and federal funds -- the Progressive Neighborhoods Program, Hawaii Office of Economic Opportunity, Refugee Resettlement Program, and State Immigrant Services Center." It should be noted that the State Immigrant Services Center was part of the Governor's office with significant funding and staffing to serve immigrants and refugees before the consolidation and establishment as an attached agency to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

OCS Director and his team has done a very good job serving low-income families and communities by

administering millions of federal funds and grants-in-aid. Immigrants and refugees can also benefit from these services, but these programs do not address the needs of immigrants and refugees. Unfortunately, OCS funds for immigrant resource centers has not been available for years).

We support this resolution asking for recommendations from community and state agencies so OCS can meet its legislative mandate and mission to serve low-income individuals, immigrants and refugees. We are confident that the recommendations will "improve access to government services for immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities to make civic and economic contributions to the community."

Mahalo for hearing this resolution and respectfully urge you to pass it.

Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman, co-chairs
Hawai'i Friends of Civil Service

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



ANNE E. PERREIRA-EUSTAQUIO
DIRECTOR

JOANN A. VIDINHAR
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IN REPLY, REFER TO:
OCS 21.1077

April 7, 2021

To: The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi Cruz, Chair,
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Hearing: Friday, April 9, 2021
Time: 3:00 a.m.
Place: Room 225 and Videoconference

From: Jovanie Domingo Dela Cruz, Executive Director
Office of Community Services

Re: H.C.R. 169 – Requesting the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to Convene a Working Group to Improve Access to Government Services for Immigrants and to Increase Immigrant Opportunities to Make Civic and Economic Contributions to the Community

I. OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION

The Office of Community Services (OCS) was established by State law, Act 305 in 1985. This law is now codified as HRS Chapter 371K. One of the key mandates of this law is that OCS provide for services to immigrants, as well as other underserved and low-income communities in the State. OCS is an attached agency within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR).

The proposed Resolution, HCR 169, would request that DLIR convene a working group, composed of representatives of the Governor, the DLIR Director, the OCS Executive Director, the Office of Language Access Executive Director, and, by invitation, representatives of the Hawaii Coalition for Immigrant Rights, the Inter-Agency Council for Immigrant Services, and any other government entity or community organization that the working group deems relevant or appropriate. The working group would meet and submit to the Legislature a report of its findings and proposed legislation at least 20 days before the convening of the Regular Session of 2022.

The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi Cruz, Chair,
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
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II. CURRENT LAW

Under current legislation, the Office of Community Services has proudly and enthusiastically worked to support immigrant communities within the State of Hawaii, but OCS has always been constrained by the limitations of the budget that OCS receives from the Legislature and the constraints of the funding that OCS receives from various federal programs.

Fundamentally, OCS receives funding from the Legislature each year for employment readiness services for people who have had great difficulty finding and keeping jobs. This has been a remarkably successful program that does a lot more than match people up with employers: it teaches people how to search for employment, how to present themselves in the best way possible in interviews, how to stay employed, it provides an ESL course for immigrants, vocational training opportunities, and other needed support to attain economic self-sufficiency. This program has been equally open to low income local residents and to immigrants, and OCS has had a large number of immigrants “graduate” from the program into long-term jobs. These employment readiness services are currently administered by local non-profit service providers – Parents and Children Together – PACT; Goodwill Industries of Hawaii; Child and Family Service – CFS; Maui Economic Opportunity; and Honolulu Community Action Program.

Currently, many local resident immigrants are served indirectly by OCS partners, such as the Community Action Agencies that receive federal funding under the Community Services Block Grant – CSBG – Program that OCS administers. These CAAs are familiar local agencies – Honolulu Community Action Program – HCAP, Kauai Economic Opportunity – KEO, Maui Economic Opportunity – MEO, and Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council – HCEOC.

Immigrant children are also being served by our CAAs, with OCS assistance, in programs such as Head Start, and through the federal programs that OCS administers for Legal Advocacy for Children. In addition, OCS serves refugees with its Refugee Resettlement program. However, with the continuous decline in the refugee placements in Hawaii, the federal funding level has decreased.

Similarly, our major federal food service program – TEFAP – The Emergency Food Assistance Program – serves low-income persons throughout the State, and many of them are immigrants.

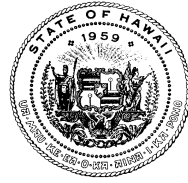
The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi Cruz, Chair,
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
April 7, 2021
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III. COMMENTS ON THE RESOLUTION

OCS **supports** the Resolution. OCS believes that it would be very helpful to have a series of round-table discussions that a working group would provide to help refresh our thinking. It is a vital component toward the development of any effective programs to gather input from various sectors of our community, especially with the effects of COVID-19.

OCS greatly appreciates the support that it receives in the community and in the Legislature, and OCS will continue to do its best to continue to earn that support. With the current programs that OCS administers, OCS is fulfilling its legislative mandate to serve the immigrant community. Immigrants are part of the broader low-income community that these anti-poverty programs serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS
1177 Alakea Street, Room B-100
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
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Comments in SUPPORT of H.C.R. 169

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANTS AND INCREASE IMMIGRANT OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE CIVIC AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY.

SENATOR BRIAN T. TANIGUCHI, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Hearing Date: 4/9/2021

Room Number: Via Vedioconference

1 **Agency's Position:** The Office of Language Access (OLA) supports House Concurrent
2 Resolution (H.C.R.) 169, as it seeks to establish a working group to improve access to
3 government services for immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities to make civic and
4 economic contributions to the community, and offer the following comments.

5 **Purpose and Justification:** The agency notes that the aspirational and exploratory goal of the
6 resolution is in line with the mission of OLA which is to address the language access needs of
7 Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons and ensure their meaningful access to services,
8 programs, and activities offered by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state
9 government, including departments, offices, commissions, boards, and other state-funded
10 agencies.

11 The lack of English proficiency has strong impacts on people's economic and social
12 activities, safety, health literacy and wellness, access to education, employment, and important
13 public assistance, benefits, programs and services. OLA looks forward to being a member and
14 collaborating with the working group.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this resolution.

HCR-169

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 7:07:04 AM

Testimony for LCA on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
LARRY ORDONEZ	Testifying for ETHNIC EDUCATION HAWAII	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony in support of HCR169

Submitted by Ethnic Education Hawai`i, Larry Ordonez President

Ethnic Education Hawai`i (EEH) is a non-profit organization founded in 1994. Our mission is to provide equal access to information in English and languages spoken in our community. We support successful participation and integration of our multi-ethnic and multilingual community in Hawai`i. We have projects to communicate and serve our large immigrant community.

EEH advocates for language access compliance with federal and state laws. EEH is committed to making communication accessible for all people in Hawai`i, including those who are limited English proficient. The Office of Community Service has a responsibility to provide leadership and service to thousands of immigrants. EEH support this resolution and supports OCS. EEH received grants from OCS for equipment supporting three ethnic language radio stations. It is important to have a state agency focus on immigrants, a vulnerable community that does not have equal access to information and government.

We strongly support OCS, a small agency attached to DLIR that has a legislative mandate and mission to serve immigrants and refugees. These resolutions will provide recommendations to assure that OCS meets its mandate and its potential.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass this resolution. Thank the committee for hearing this resolution.

Submitted by Larry Ordonez President Ethnic Education Hawai`i

April 8, 2021

Honorable Brian Taniguchi, Chairman
Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Hearing Date: Friday April 9, 2021
Time: 3pm
Place: Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

Re: HCR 169 Requesting the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to Convene a Working Group to Improve Access to Government Services for Immigrants and Increase Immigrant Opportunities to Make Civic and Economic Contributions to the Community.

Dear Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara and Members of the Labor, Culture and the Arts Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Goodwill Hawaii, a non-profit organization serving people who are economically disadvantaged, including low-income persons and immigrants, for over 60 years in the state of Hawaii. Goodwill Hawaii supports HCR 169, which calls for a formation of a working group to make recommendation to improve immigrants' access to Government services and increase immigrant opportunities to contribute to the community.

Goodwill has worked with immigrants for many years. Goodwill provides employment services and helped many immigrants obtained employment so they can make meaningful economic contribution to the state of Hawaii. Due to language barriers and cultural differences, immigrants often require additional supports and resources to access Government and community services. While Goodwill tries to hire multi-lingual staff with diverse background to support this population, there are still many unmet needs that current resources are not enough to support. The COVID-19 pandemic and the unbalanced impacts on immigrants clearly indicated that current services and supports are inadequate for immigrant families. Convening a working group can help to increase understanding of the current needs, identify ways that these needs can be met, and make recommendations to the legislature so appropriate resources can be allocated to assist this population.

Last but not least, I want to express our gratitude for the work of OCS and believe that the working group can help to support OCS in meeting its mandate. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HCR 169.

Sincerely,

Emily Lau
Vice President of Mission Services, Goodwill Hawaii
E-mail: ELau@higoodwill.org
Phone: 808-792-5072

Inter-Agency Council
Comments in SUPPORT of H.C.R. 169

Requesting The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to convene a working group to improve access to government services for immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities to make civic and economic contributions to the community.

Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

My name is Darrin Sato and I am the Co-Chair of the Inter Agency Council. I am testifying in support of House Concurrent Resolution (H.C.R.) 169 to establish a working group to improve access to government services for immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities.

The purpose of the Interagency Council for Immigrant and Refugee Services is to promote justice and fairness for immigrants and refugees by: 1) serving as a planning and coordinating council to secure decent living, economic, educational, social, and other conditions conducive to the welfare of the immigrant and refugee community through the coordination and planning of services which maximize resources, avoid duplication, and meet the needs of immigrants and refugees, 2) educating the public on behalf of the needs of immigrants and refugees, and 3) serving as a clearinghouse for information on programs and services pertaining to immigrants and refugees. We are comprised of close to 45 agencies (government and non-profit entities).

We believe people who have Limited English Proficiency, have additional barriers due to cultural and linguistic barriers to work, education, health and other services/programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this resolution.



April 8, 2021

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Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HCR 169, which requests for the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to Convene a Working Group to Improve Access to Government Services for Immigrants and to Increase Immigrant Opportunities to Make Civic and Economic Contributions to the Community.

Hawaii Foodbank serves 1 in 6 people in the state of Hawaii, many of whom come from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds including those from the Philippines, China, Korea, Japan, Micronesia and Vietnam. We administer both the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (also known as CSFP or Senior Food Box Program) and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) in partnership with the State of Hawaii and the Office of Community Services. Last year, we were able to serve 6,267 seniors through SFMNP and 2,116 seniors through CSFP on both Oahu and Kauai. About 70 percent of seniors reported their ethnicity as Asian, 10 percent reported being white, 7 percent reported being Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 0.5 percent reported being American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.5 percent reported being Black or African American, and the remaining 12 percent reported two ethnicities. This data is reflective of Hawaii Population Characteristics provided by the U.S. Census Bureau (2020)¹ and provides a snapshot that helps demonstrate that a large majority of the clients we serve are immigrants themselves or of immigrant descent.

We see on a first-hand basis the many challenges that foreign-born residents face, especially language barriers. Many residents are not able to communicate their needs, or understand what services are available to them. It is important to provide support to immigrants as they make up a majority of our population and, additionally, are large contributors to our state and local economy. This measure is important as it seeks to improve access to government services and increase opportunities for all Hawaii residents.

With much respect and aloha,

Marielle Terbio
Hawaii Foodbank
Director of Community Engagement & Advocacy

Laura Kay Rand
Hawaii Foodbank
Vice President & Chief Impact Officer

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2020, June 25). *Hawaii Population Characteristics 2019*. Hawaii.Gov. <https://census.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Hawaii-Population-Characteristics-2019.pdf>



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Senate Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair

Senate Les Ihara Jr., Vice Chair

Re Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill no. HCR 169, Requesting the Department of Labor and Industrial relations to convene a working group to improve access to government services for immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities to make civic and economic contributions to the community.

Hearing:

Date: Friday, April 9, 2021

Time: 3:00pm

Place: CR 225 & Videoconference

Aloha Senators,

My name is Chanella Asuncion; I am a native-born from Kauai and currently a student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am working on earning my Master's Degree in Social Work. I have been employed at a non-profit for twelve years. Over the years, I worked in different programs interacting with community members providing them with necessary support services or referrals. Since Hawaii is a melting pot of cultures and ethnicities, I have associated with immigrants from the Philippines, Micronesia, and others who have migrated to Hawaii from other areas of the world, which has allowed me to see what services are needed here on Kauai.

In the HCR 169 regarding The Department of Labor and Industrial relations, to convene a working group to improve access to government services for immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities to make civic and economic contributions to the community is vital. In lines 7 and 8, it states that "immigrants continue to face many barriers." As a social worker, I have witnessed the barriers that immigrants face here in Kauai. As there is a lack of resources, discrimination, cultural differences, and stereotyping that many immigrants and refugees experience. After the Immigration Resource Center's closing on Kauai, it has significantly impacted how immigrants receive service as there

is no support. With this bill being passed, it will help produce the necessary resources and funding to help immigrants and refugees obtain government services without being intimidated. I am in strong support of the bill and feel it is highly needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Please vote Yes!

Mahalo,

Chanella Asuncion

HCR-169

Submitted on: 4/7/2021 8:13:48 AM

Testimony for LCA on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha LCA Committee,

I am writing in support of HCR169. As a public health professional working with foreign-born people and the son of refugees, I have witnessed firsthand the desire for our local immigrant communities to contribute to our economies and culture. In the devastating economic fallout of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this resolution would identify new opportunities to enhance our workforce and civil society.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

HCR-169

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 9:06:09 AM

Testimony for LCA on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in full support of HCR169. Mahalo for your consideration.