

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

IN REPLY, REFER TO:
OCS 23.1031

January 30, 2023

To: The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair,
The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Human Services

Date: Tuesday, January 31, 2023
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 329, State Capitol & Videoconference

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

Position: Support

Re: H.B. 439 RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

H.B. 439 would create a unit within the Office of Community Services (OCS), to be named the “Immigrant services and access unit” to promote economic self-sufficiency, inclusion, and community integration for immigrants in Hawaii by improving their access to appropriate services, resources, and benefits.

The unit would offer services that would include English language training; translation and interpretation; workforce development training; legal services; assistance in obtaining citizenship and naturalization; and programs to assist in learning about and accessing government services.

The bill directs that the unit would coordinate with non-profit organizations, and with support from grant funds, provide for direct services to immigrants. The unit would coordinate with other State and county agencies that serve immigrants, the unit would explore all available federal resources, including grants; and it would establish an advisory committee with representatives from immigrant communities, organizations that serve immigrants, and appropriate State and county agencies.

Services would be available to immigrants, refugees, citizens of the nations that are in free association with the United States – namely the Federated States of Micronesia, the

Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau, undocumented persons, and other persons regardless of their immigration status.

The bill would appropriate funds for this unit, and would provide funding for staff: two FTE positions – coordinator and clerical positions for FY 2023-2024; and five FTE positions for State FY 2024-2025 – one coordinator, one clerical position, and three specialists.

II. CURRENT LAW

The Office of Community Services (OCS) is an agency attached to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. OCS was created by the Legislature by Act 305, SLH 1985, codified as Chapter 371K, Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

The mission of OCS is to eliminate the causes and conditions of poverty for economically disadvantaged persons, immigrants, and refugees in the State of Hawaii, by facilitating and enhancing the development, delivery, and coordination of effective programs for these persons and communities to enable them to achieve and maintain greater economic self-sufficiency and integration into Hawaii's society.

III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL

OCS supports the intent of this bill. H.B. 439 would reinforce the mandate that OCS already has pursuant to HRS Chapter 371K to provide many of the same programs as are listed in Section (a)(1) of the proposed new section in Chapter 371K. We wish to clarify and emphasize that the Office of Community Services is not a direct services agency. OCS contracts with non-profit organizations to provide direct services to program beneficiaries, under oversight by OCS. OCS administers relevant and appropriate federal programs “off the shelf”, and OCS designs new programs for which it seeks to obtain funding from the State and potentially other sources.

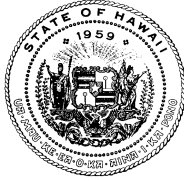
OCS has a couple of minor concerns for which we seek amendments. First, the inclusion of “Other persons, regardless of the person’s immigration status” as being eligible for services in the new unit. This category would seem to open up services to virtually anyone and thereby divert the focus, attention, and available funds away from the specific categories of persons listed in subsections (1) through (4) of this section. Accordingly, we would recommend deletion of category (5).

Another concern is that the bill has no express income-eligibility limitation on who would be eligible for services. We would recommend adding a provision to allow OCS to set income-eligibility ceilings on services in the various programs that OCS would administer through programs that this unit would create under this bill.

Lastly, with respect to Section 2 of the bill, which lists the functions of the immigrant services and access unit, OCS requests that an additional function be added, “Oversee and monitor the Immigrant Resource Center program”.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII



APHIRAK BAMRUNGRUAN
OLA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KE PO'O HO'OKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS**

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**Testimony COMMENTING on HB 439
RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES**

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN M. MIZUNO, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE TEREZ AMATO, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: 1/31/2023

Room Number: 329

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
- 2 Executive Budget Request.
- 3 **Agency Testimony:** The Office of Language Access (OLA) appreciates the intent of this
- 4 measure, provided the measure's passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in the
- 5 Governor's Budget Request and offers the following comments.
- 6 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this measure is to establish and appropriate funds for
- 7 an immigrant service and access unit within the Office of Community Services (OCS) to
- 8 promote economic self-sufficiency, inclusion, and community integration for immigrants by
- 9 improving access to appropriate services.
- 10 Hawaii is one of the most culturally diverse states and has one of the highest proportions of non-English
- 11 speakers in the nation. Many of these non-English speakers are immigrants and migrants with Limited
- 12 English Proficiency (LEP). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community
- 13 Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, an estimate of 25.9% or 353,663 of Hawaii residents, 5 years and older,
- 14 speak a language other than English at home. Of those, 152,929 or 11.2% indicated that they speak
- 15 English "less than very well."
- 16 English proficiency (or a lack of) has a great impact on people's economic and social activities, and health
- 17 literacy and wellness. It effects their ability to successfully access education, employment, and important

1 public assistance, benefits, programs and services. An immigrant service and access unit will provide
2 a critical link to communication and make services accessible to individuals with LEP.

3 This measure will allow OLA to work closely with other partners to further improve language
4 access in our state government. If the measure is passed, OLA will collaborate with OCS to
5 assist immigrant and migrant individuals with Limited English Proficiency to the extent
6 allowable by law.

7 Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



PACIFIC GATEWAY CENTER

January 30, 2023

The Honorable John Mizuno, Chair
The Honorable Terez Amano, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street

RE: Support with Amendments for HB 439, Relating to Immigrant Services

Aloha e Chair Mizuno and members of the Committee,

My name is En Young, and I am the Executive Director of Pacific Gateway Center, a fifty year old agency dedicated to assisting immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers succeed in Hawai`i.

In addition, I was once an employee of the State of Hawai`i in the Office of Community Services(OCS). Having been a program manager, procurement officer, and now service provider, I can professionally and personally attest this bill is sorely needed.

OCS was created out of a consolidation of several offices with differing mandates. Over the years the mandates leaned heavily on self-sufficiency programs which were funded by the Federal government, with OCS seeing a small portion of its budget funded through the State. This left State-funded immigrant services restricted to a small portion of our primary program, workforce development, and whatever Federal programs passed through the agency.

Over time, the politicized national issue of immigration has left the Federal Government in gridlock, with long backlogs for nearly every type of immigrant, migrant, humanitarian parole, and asylum seeker. Even now, the Federal Government is struggling to catch up to their workload caused by the decimation of their staffing by the previous administration and humanitarian crises around the world in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the Ukraine. Similarly, with the lack of available funds and multi-year processes, service providers must carry caseloads for years to see them through to conclusion, making these services intensive and complex.

With the loss of support from the State and Federal governments, service providers in this highly charged atmosphere have specialized in the services we could cover through other funding, legal services, translation, and others mentioned in the bill.

PGC stands in strong support of this bill, with some clarifying amendments. Section 2, subparagraph 1 mandates the immigrant and services access unit to “offer services.” OCS has been a managing agency providing services through Purchase of Service contracts. The current wording may be construed that OCS would provide direct services, in conflict with subparagraph 2.

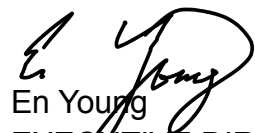
Further, certain aspects of services that include large populations of immigrants, such as language access services, have been expanded due to changes in the law and the need for compliance by State agencies. In the example of Limited English Proficiency (LEP), access and compliance issues are overseen by the Office of Language Access (OLA).

The staff of Pacific Gateway Center and the network of service providers we work with wholeheartedly agree on the necessity of this bill and the associated funding, and defer to the staff of OCS and its network of Governmental agencies to determine the services and delivery method appropriate for the mandate of the office.

As stated in the preamble of this bill, it is widely recognized that getting our newcomers the authorization to work and ability to contribute is a win-win, with immigrants overrepresented in the hospitality industry as well as in agriculture; key, yet forgotten contributors to our food self-sufficiency. A dedicated unit in the State government will make the nearly one-fifth of our population a priority, and allow them to fully contribute their talents and skills to our home.

We regret we cannot attend the hearing in person or by Zoom, and thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Mahalo Nui,



En Young
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB439
RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: January 31st, 2022

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) is in full **support** of HB439, which establishes and appropriates moneys for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services.

As an organization representing more than 25 immigrant-serving/led nonprofits across the state, we support HB439 because it recognizes the valuable contributions that immigrants make to Hawai'i and acknowledges the barriers they face in accessing government services and participating fully in their communities.

The state of Hawai'i has one of the highest ratios of foreign-born individuals per capita in the country but we lack many of the systems and services that states such as Washington, California, Illinois or New York have. While our population size is much smaller than these states, with coordinated effort we could better serve and support our immigrant residents to contribute even more fully to our collective economic, civic, and political life.

HB439 establishes an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services. This unit would offer services such as English language training, translation and interpretation, workforce development training, legal services, assistance in obtaining citizenship and naturalization, and programs to learn about and access government services. This unit would also coordinate with nonprofit organizations, other immigrant-serving state agencies, and county immigrant services offices and explore all available federal resources.

We are requesting the following amendments to the bill that will allow the Immigrant Services and Access unit authority and flexibility to identify and provide various appropriate and comprehensive services.



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

Section 2, Page 5, Line 3: change the word “shall” to “may”

Section 2, Page 5, Line 4: The line should read “Offer services, including but not limited to:”

HB439 is necessary to ensure that all Hawaii's immigrants have equal access to government programs and services.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Liza Ryan Gill

Coordinator/Refounder, Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights

Filipinos for Affirmative Action

House Committee on Human Services

January 31, 2023, 9:30am

Hawai'i State Legislature

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 329

To: Chair John M. Mizuno
Vice-Chair Terez Amato
Committee on Human Services Members: Della Au Belatti, Diamond Garcia,
Greggor Ilagan, Bertrand Kobayashi, Scott Y. Nishimoto, Jenna Takenouchi

From: Agnes Malate, PhD
armalate@yahoo.com

My name is Agnes Malate and I am in full support of House Bill 439 to establish and appropriate moneys for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services. I immigrated to Hawai'i from the Philippines with my parents and can speak uniquely to the experiences of an immigrant family and also from the perspective of one has been actively involved with advocating for and providing services to immigrants and migrants from all points of the world, especially during the pandemic.

I grew up in the former plantation communities of Waipahu and Ewa in a period when being Filipino and fresh off the (FOB), label for being an immigrant, was a stigma that I struggled with into adulthood. I kept it to myself for I did not want to burden my parents. Among my peers I upheld the façade of being a model student and leader. I am grateful to have an informal network of family, teachers, friends, and community who believed and supported me to counteract the challenges of navigating the public school system that was not responsive to the needs of immigrant students.

I am fortunate to be the first in my family to graduate from college with a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science and a doctoral degree in educational foundations from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH Manoa). I did not have a roadmap to chart my course and realized later as a professional and educator that there were resources that could have assisted me that I was unaware of at the time and many now that others are unfamiliar with that could be of assistance to them. I also recognize as director of the UH Mānoa Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) and in my work with the community during the pandemic of the dire gap in services to support immigrants, Hawai'i COFA residents, refugees, and others. The importance and value of HB 439 is best illustrated by what I have learned serving as the co-chair of FilCom CARES that Dr. Amy Agbayani, Dr. May Rose Dela Cruz, and I established because of a lack of government and coordinated community response to support the Filipino community.

Filipinos comprise 16% of Hawai'i's population but have experienced 24% of the COVID-19 deaths and 19% of cases at the height of the pandemic. In the initial months when it became apparent that Filipinos were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, a group of over 25 Filipino leaders united to do something about it and collaborated to form FilCom CARES, a project of the Filipino Community Center (FilCom). Today FilCom CARES is the leading entity proactively working to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the

Filipino population in Hawai‘i. Since November 2020, Filcom CARES has worked with the State DOH, community- and faith-based organizations, and University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa faculty, staff, and students on Hawai‘i, Kaua‘i Maui, Molokai, and O‘ahu islands on initiatives to assist Filipinos and other underserved communities through outreach and education, development of culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, dissemination of COVID-19 and other health and social services information on social media and traditional media, and establishment of channels of communication with government and community partners.

The pandemic underscored how unprepared the government was in meeting the crises that disproportionately affected Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, and Filipinos. Accessing services and funding for programs was difficult. At first vaccination clinics were only available in town, information was not readily available in languages accessible to individuals who did not know or had limited understanding of English, and they did not have access to technology that was necessary to take advantage of services. With modest CARES funding secured through The Legal Clinic and the State Department of Health (DOH) Community Outreach and Public Health Education funding and group, FilCom CARES was able to collaborate with other community organizations and government entities to serve the community.

I strongly support HB 439 with the following amendments:

- 1) Section 2, Line 3 (Page 5): Change the work "shall" to "may".
- 2) Section 2, Line 4 (Page 5): The line should read "Offer services including but not limited to:"

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony and ask for you consideration to approve the measure.

HB-439

Submitted on: 1/28/2023 9:40:02 AM

Testimony for HUS on 1/31/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashleigh Loa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB439

RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair

Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: January 31st, 2022

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB439, which establishes and appropriates moneys for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services.

I support HB439 because it recognizes the valuable contributions that immigrants make to Hawaii and acknowledges the barriers they face in accessing government services and participating fully in their communities.

The bill establishes an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services. This unit would offer services such as English language training, translation and interpretation, workforce development training, legal services, assistance in obtaining citizenship and naturalization, and programs to learn about and access government services. This unit would also coordinate with nonprofit organizations, other immigrant-serving state agencies, and county immigrant services offices and explore all available federal resources.

HB439 is necessary to ensure that all Hawaii's immigrants have equal access to government programs and services.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Ashleigh Loa

HB-439

Submitted on: 1/29/2023 12:39:30 PM

Testimony for HUS on 1/31/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

As a concerned citizen and public health professional, I am writing in support of HB439, which establishes and appropriates moneys for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services.

As the son of Vietnamese refugees who become active, contributing members of society, I support HB439 because it recognizes the valuable contributions that immigrants make to Hawai'i, despite the ongoing barriers they face in accessing government services and participating fully in their communities. In my current public health profession, I have borne witness to immigrant in Hawai'i being unable to access needed and desired health services due to administrative challenges like identification and paperwork.

These challenges will be ameliorated by this bill, which establishes an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services. This unit would offer services such as English language training, translation and interpretation, workforce development training, legal services, assistance in obtaining citizenship and naturalization, and programs to learn about and access government services. Additionally, this unit would also coordinate with nonprofit organizations, other immigrant-serving state agencies, and county immigrant services offices and explore all available federal resources.

HB439 is necessary to ensure that all Hawaii's immigrants have equal access to government programs and services, thereby ensuring both community health and economic prosperity.

With aloha,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

HB-439

Submitted on: 1/29/2023 2:12:36 PM

Testimony for HUS on 1/31/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
amy agbayani	Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights	Support	In Person

Comments:

Testimony in support of HB439

RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES

Submitted by Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights,

Co-chairs: Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman

Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights strongly support HB439 RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES. This bill establishes and appropriates money and positions for an Immigrant Services and Access unit within the Office of Community Services, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

We are requesting the following amendments that will allow the Immigrant Services and Access unit authority and flexibility to identify and provide various appropriate and comprehensive services.

Section 2, Page 5, Line 3: change the word “shall” to “may”

Section 2, Page 5, Line 4: The line should read “Offer services, including but not limited to:”

We appreciate the legislature’s past support of the Filipino Legislative Caucus priorities: HCR 169 (2021) and SB 2457(2022). Community leaders and the legislature acknowledge that OCS

resources for immigrants were significantly reduced over the years and provided recommendation and resources for immigrants and the Office of Community Service to meet its legislative mandate relating to immigrants and refugees.

We respectfully request you include our amendments and strongly support HB 439 (part of 2023 Filipino Legislative Caucus package). This bill will establish an Immigrant Services and Access unit within the Office of Community Services whose purpose is to promote economic self-sufficiency, inclusion, and community integration for immigrants in our state. There are over 250,000 foreign born persons in the state; nearly half of all immigrants to Hawai'i are from the Philippines (46%); Japan (8%), China (8%), Korea (7%), Micronesia (5%), Vietnam (4%) and Mexico (2%). Fifty-seven percent of Hawai'i's immigrants are naturalized US citizens and many have US born children.

We believe an Immigrant Services and Access unit will improve OCS's capacity to increase and improve services to serve the immigrant community who face barriers to accessing government resources and are excluded from full participation in our community. We respectfully ask you to include our recommended amendments and support HB 439.

Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman, co-chairs

Hawai'i Friends of Civil Service

HB-439

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 8:15:41 AM

Testimony for HUS on 1/31/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Rallojaj	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Maria Rallojaj. I am writing in support of HB439, which establishes and appropriates moneys for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services.

I support HB439 because it recognizes the valuable contributions that immigrants make to Hawaii and acknowledges the barriers they face in accessing government services and participating fully in their communities.

As a first-generation immigrant, I have had a lot of exposure to the challenges that immigrants face that come with adapting to a new country. It is not easy and navigating through a complex government system can be overwhelming. When I was eight-years-old, I remember how scary it was being in a completely different country, and I can't imagine how it was for my father. Thankfully, I was able to wear multiple hats and help him with navigating through getting health care or even interpreting documents for him.

The bill establishes an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services. This unit would offer services such as English language training, translation and interpretation, workforce development training, legal services, assistance in obtaining citizenship and naturalization, and programs to learn about and access government services. This unit would also coordinate with nonprofit organizations, other immigrant-serving state agencies, and county immigrant services offices and explore all available federal resources.

HB439 is necessary to ensure that all Hawaii's immigrants have equal access to government programs and services.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Maria Rallojay

HB-439

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 9:36:54 AM

Testimony for HUS on 1/31/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
wilfredo tungol	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committees:

I am testifying in strong support of this bill.

I am a former vice-president and board member of Hawaii Justice Immigration Center (fka Na Loi'o Legal Services) for over 10 years and I am very familiar with immigration population and their need for services.

Hawaii has one of the largest immigration population per capita in the country. For most recent immigrants, language is a problem. Related to this is the ability to access help that may help these immigrants to successfully integrate into our society. Immigrants are not a drain to our society. They are human resources that help our society economically and socially.

This bill provides a hands up, NOT a hand out by helping the newly arrived immigrants to services that will help them find jobs, social services, and other needed services that they otherwise may not know how to access. It is important that there be a resource agency in each major county that can assist them. By doing so, they can be an asset to our community and contribute to our economic well-being. This is specially true with our current labor shortage in the lower income working population.

Money that is appropriated to staff the centers will be a worthwhile investment and therefore should be provided to the OCS.

Please move pass this very important bill.

Mahalo,

Wilfredo Tungol

Pearl City, HI

HB-439

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 10:25:53 AM

Testimony for HUS on 1/31/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Rose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB439

RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair

Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: January 31st, 2022

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB439, which establishes and appropriates moneys for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services.

I support HB439 because it recognizes the valuable contributions that immigrants make to Hawaii and acknowledges the barriers they face in accessing government services and participating fully in their communities.

The bill establishes an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services. This unit would offer services such as English language training, translation and interpretation, workforce development training, legal services, assistance in obtaining citizenship and naturalization, and programs to learn about and access government

services. This unit would also coordinate with nonprofit organizations, other immigrant-serving state agencies, and county immigrant services offices and explore all available federal resources.

HB439 is necessary to ensure that all Hawaii's immigrants have equal access to government programs and services.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Valerie Rose

January 30, 2023

To: Representative John M. Mizuno; Chair
Representative Terez Amato; Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

From: Jordana Ferreira
Constituent of District 39

Re: **H.B. No. 439 – Relating to Immigrant Services**
Establishes and appropriates moneys for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services.

On: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 at 9:30 AM

I support the passage of H.B. No. 439, which would establish and appropriate funds for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services.

Immigrants comprise eighteen percent of Hawaii’s population and have made and continue to make significant contributions to the State, including our economy, workforce, and communities at large.

In our State, the counties of Maui and Hawaii have offices for immigrant affairs. However, I believe this is a State responsibility and the State should offer these services as a public good.

I would encourage the committee to consider adding language in the bill that would do the following:

1. Encourage the immigrant services and access unit to work with city and county officials to ensure services provided meet the unique needs of each island immigrant community;
2. Encourage the immigrant services and access unit to work with the Office of Language Access to ensure materials and pertinent documentation are provided in multiple languages accordingly;
and
3. Appropriate funds that would be earmarked for cultural and linguistic training for the immigrant services and access unit staff.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB439
RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES**
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

LATE

Hearing Date: January 31, 2023

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB439, which establishes and appropriates funds for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services.

I support HB439 because it recognizes the valuable contributions that immigrants make to Hawai'i and acknowledges the barriers they face in accessing government services and participating fully in their communities.

If established by this bill, the immigrant services and access unit would offer English language training, translation and interpretation, workforce development, legal services, resources for citizenship and naturalization, and programs to learn about and access government services. This unit would coordinate with nonprofit organizations, other immigrant-serving state agencies, and county immigrant services offices. It would also help to explore all available federal resources.

HB439 is necessary to ensure that all Hawai'i's immigrants have equal access to government programs and services.

Thank you for your consideration,
C. Sakuda

HB-439

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 9:26:43 PM

Testimony for HUS on 1/31/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary K Ochs	Hawai'i Workers Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB439

Funding for IMMIGRANT SERVICES Unit within OCS

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair

Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: January 31st, 2022

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Hawai'i Workers Center **in support of HB439**, which establishes and appropriates moneys for an immigrant services and access unit within the Office of Community Services.

HB439 because it recognizes the valuable contributions that immigrants make to Hawai'i and offers resources to remove many of the biggest barriers they face in accessing government services and participating fully in their communities. Language access is especially key along with workforce training, legal and citizenship services.

This is a very cost effective and smart investment so that immigrants can be fully integrated into our communities and be able to thrive.

HB439 is necessary to ensure that all Hawaii's immigrants have equal access to government programs and services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary K. Ochs

Mary K. Ochs

Hawai'i Workers Center