



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

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
Member, Language Access Advisory Council**

March 7, 2008

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 a one-year 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
10 drafted legislation, prepared testimony, testified before the legislature ranging from nondiscrimination in
11 employment and services to telehealth insurance issues. During my tenure, I have briefed departmental,
12 county, and other state personnel on issues related to unlawful harassment to language access.

13 I am active in the community and was part of the working group that wrote and supported the
14 Language Access statute. I kept my department apprised and drafted and presented testimony on its
15 behalf. If we work together, we will have positive change. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



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

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

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March 5, 2008

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

Date: March 7, 2008

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 016, State Capitol

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

**GM 407 - 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 and has been a productive member of the OLA. 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.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



DARWIN L. D. CHING
DIRECTOR

COLLEEN Y. LaCLAIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

SERAFIN P. COLMENARES JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
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March 5, 2008

TO: Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Honorable Clayton Hee, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor

FROM: Serafin "Jun" Colmenares, Executive Director, Office of Language Access

RE: **Testimony in Support of GM407 (GERALD HISASHI OHTA)**

HEARING: Friday, March 7, 2008, 10:00 a.m., Room 016

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 (LEP) population in Hawaii and recognizes the need to continue to work to improve and make government programs, services and activities accessible to the LEP population.

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 access to essential government services, programs and activities. 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. Mr. Ohta's knowledge combined with his 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 and vice-chair of the Council, Mr. Ohta has indicated an interest in finding ways to improve and systematize language access so all of Hawai'i'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.



CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 407

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
March 7, 2008, 10 a.m. | Conference Room 016

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council,
Gubernatorial Nominee, GERALD HISASHI OHTA, for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

To: Hon. Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Hon. Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair
Hon. Members of the Judiciary and Labor Committee

From: Margarita Hopkins
President, Congress of Visayan Organizations

My name is Margarita Hopkins, President of the Congress of Visayan Organizations, which is a statewide umbrella organization that represents 22 unit organizations of Visayan ancestry.

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judiciary and Labor Committee, I testify in strong support of Gerald Hisashi Ohta's confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council.

We appreciate and support his continued leadership to bring Hawai'i State Dept. of Health colleagues to the table to undertake the challenges of capacity building for government agencies to provide language access to Hawai'i's communities whose first language is not English.

Thank you for the opportunity to support Sr. Earnest in my testimony. Please consider doing the same in your vote.

For the President:

Serafin Colmenares Jr.
Executive Vice President

Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

A HAWAII RIGHTS ADVOCACY GROUP • FOUNDED IN 1990

c/o 728 Nunu St. • Kailua, HI 96734 • <http://www.philippinesonline.org/thecoalition/>

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 407

Senate Committees on Judiciary and Labor
March 7, 2008, 10 a.m. Conference Room 016

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council,
Governatorial Nominee, GERALD HISASHI OHTA, for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

To: Hon. Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Hon. Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair
Hon. Members of the Judiciary and Labor Committee

From: Charlene Cuaresma, MPH, President, Filipino Coalition For Solidarity

My name is Charlene Cuaresma. As president of the Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, I am submitting testimony in strong support of Gerald Hisahi Ohta's confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council. Since its inception in 1990, the Coalition has represented more than 50 Filipino community leaders whose aim is to work for social justice issues to empower Filipinos to make socially responsible contributions to Hawai'i and our global neighbors through education, advocacy, and social action.

Mr. Ohta has served as a liaison between the Hawai'i State Dept. of Health and the Inter-Agency Council For Immigrants and Refugees for over 30 years. The Coalition looks to the leadership of Mr. Ohta to be inclusive in providing a venue for community and systems stakeholders to provide input for the Language Access Advisory Council in order to implement the intent of Act 290. We are grateful for his dedication and service to Hawai'i's limited English proficient communities.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure. Thank you for considering to vote yes on Mr. Ohta's confirmation.

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma
President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 407

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
March 7, 2008, 10 a.m. | Conference Room 016

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, GERALD HISAHI OHTA, for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

To: Hon. Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Hon. Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair
Hon. Members of the Judiciary and Labor Committee

My name is Amy Agbayani. I serve as Vice Chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations Region XII, which represents the interests of Filipinos in Hawai'i, Guam, and the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands. NaFFAA Region XII is an affiliate of the National NaFFAA. Washington policy-makers, private industry and national advocacy groups recognize NaFFAA as the Voice of Filipinos and Filipino Americans throughout the United States. We are a non-partisan, non-profit national affiliation of more than five hundred Filipino-American institutions and umbrella organizations that span twelve regions throughout the continental United States and U.S. Pacific territories.

NaFFAA is happy to support the nomination of Gerald Hisashi Ohta for confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council. We urge him to utilize his wide network of language access stakeholders to serve as resource persons to the Advisory Council to ensure a wide range of critical analysis to determine best practices for implementing the spirit of the law. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please support his confirmation.

Sincerely,

Amy Agbayani, Ph.D., Vice Chair, NaFFAA Region XII



OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

P.O. Box 17531 • Honolulu • Hawaii 96817

Unit Organizations

Alliance of Residential
 Carehome Administrators
 Aloha Saguibsib Cultural
 Foundation, Inc.
 Annac ti Bado iti Hawaii
 Annac ti Batac
 Annac ti Caoayan 2002
 Annak ti Kaiflokuan iti
 America
 Annak ti Sinait iti Hawaii
 Asingan Organization of
 Hawaii
 Badoc-Pinili Aid
 Association of Hawaii
 Banna Association of
 Hawaii
 Bannatiran Association of
 Hawaii
 Batangas Association of
 Hawaii
 Bulacan Circle of Hawaii
 Caballeros de Dimasalang
 Cabugao Sons & Daughters
 of Hawaii
 Candonians of Hawaii
 Caoayan ISAH
 Cavitenians of Hawaii
 Dingras Association of
 Hawaii
 Divine Word College
 Alumni Association
 FilAm Sports USA
 Fil American Citizens
 League
 Filipino Business Women's
 Club
 Filipino Nurses Organization
 of Hawaii
 Filipino Women's Civic
 Club
 GUMIL Hawaii
 GUMIL Oahu
 Hawaii Filipino Women's
 Club
 Hawaii Council of Bilingual
 Educators
 ILAH
 Ilocos Nortenians of
 America
 INCAT Alumni Association
 of Hawaii
 International Filipino
 Society of Hawaii
 Kalayaan Phil.-Hi. Int.
 La Union Circle of
 Hawaii
 Lingayen Gulf Club of
 Hawaii

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 407

Senate Committees on Judiciary and Labor
 March 7, 2008, 10 a.m. | Conference Room 016

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the
GERALD HISASHI OHTA, for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

To: Hon. Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
 Hon. Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair
 Hon. Members of the Judiciary and Labor Committee

From: Franklin Borromeo, President
 Oahu Filipino Community Council

My name is Franklin Borromeo, president of the
 Oahu Filipino Community Council. OFCC is an umbrella
 organization comprised of sixty-two members (62) that
 represent a network of non-profit civic groups with a
 unified vision to improve the lives of our Filipino
 communities.

The Oahu Filipino Community Council supports
 the confirmation of Gerald Hisashi Ohta to the Language
 Access Advisory Council. Mr. Ohta brings the perspective
 and working knowledge of the Dept. of Health and
 considerations of state agencies, in order to design
 strategies and seek partnerships to build the capacity of
 government agencies and their contractors to implement
 the intent of Act 290.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this
 testimony. The Oahu Filipino Community Council
 appreciates your consideration of his confirmation.

Sincerely,

Franklin Borromeo, President, OFCC

Unit Organizations

Magsingal Association of
 Hawaii
 Narvacan/San Antonio Club of
 Hawaii
 Nueva Vizcaya Association of
 Hawaii
 Pasuquinos Association of
 Hawaii
 Philippine Cultural Foundation
 Philippine Nurses
 Association of Hawaii
 Piddig Association of Hawaii
 Sanchez Mira Association of
 Hawaii
 San Manuel Pangasinan
 Association of Hawaii
 San Nicolaneos USA
 San Nicolas Goodwill
 Foundation
 San Nicolas Teachers of
 Hawaii
 Santa Lucia Association of
 Hawaii
 Sarrat Association of Hawaii
 Sarrat International Inc.
 Sinait Nt. High School Alumni
 of Hawaii
 Solsona of Hawaii
 Tarlac Mutual Club of Hawaii
 TPCP
 Kalihi Ballroom, Inc.
 Sadiri ti San Nicolas iti Hawaii
 Samar Leyte Association of
 Hawaii
 Sampaguita/Sunflower Club of
 Hawaii
 San Juan Association of
 Hawaii
 San Nicolas Nat. High
 Santa Marians of Hawaii
 School Alumni
 Santa Nicolas Nat. High
 School Bingao Annex
 Tagalog Association of Oahu
 United Bacarreños of Hawaii
 United Group of Home
 Operators
 United Pangasinan of Hawaii
 United Urdaneta Club of
 Hawaii
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 Vigan Association of Hawaii

2007-2008 OFCC OFFICERS & BOARD President: **Franklin Borromeo** | 1st Vice President: **Cirvalina Longboy** | 2nd Vice
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March 5, 2008

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

From: Dr. Tin Myiang Thein, Executive Director
Pacific Gateway Center

Re: GM 405, Sister Earnest Chung
Reappointment to Advisory Council, Office of Language Access, DLIR
GM 406, Dominic Inocelda
Reappointment to Advisory Council, Office of Language Access, DLIR
GM 407, Gerald Ohta
Reappointment to Advisory Council, Office of Language Access, DLIR

(Public hearing scheduled for Saturday, March 7, 2008, 10:00 am, Rm 016)

I strongly support Sister Earnest of Catholic Charities, Dominic Inocelda of Susannah Wesley Community Center, and Gerald Ohta of State Department of Health Affirmative Action Office, who are highly experienced, most knowledgeable, superb people working in key agencies involved in language access. These three people are as highly qualified as any in all of Hawaii for the language access program.

Two main points:

1. Experience, knowledge of three superb people - All three have at least 25 years of experience each in their respective agencies and positions. They know the issues and territory of language access [and much more in the health and social services arena] as much as anyone in Hawaii and bring long years of hands-on experience, wide perspective, tremendous knowledge with them.
2. Key agencies - All three have each worked for their respective agencies and in their respective positions for at least two or more decades. Their agencies are large and important agencies in the health and social services, again like the three individuals, as important as any in Hawaii for their respective missions.

Again, I strongly support Sister Earnest, Dominic Inocelda, and Gerald Ohta for reappointment to the Advisory Council of the Office of Language Access, DLIR.



UNITED FILIPINO COUNCIL OF HAWAII

P.O. BOX 498, Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0498

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 407

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Lynne Gutierrez (Oahu)

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
March 7, 2008, 10 a.m. | Conference Room 016

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Language Access Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, GERALD HISASHI OHTA, for a term to expire 6-30-2012.

To: Hon. Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Hon. Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair
Hon. Members of the Judiciary and Labor Committee

From: Brian Andaya, President
United Filipino Council of Hawai'i

The United Filipino Council of Hawaii supports the confirmation of Gerald Hisashi Ohta to the Language Access Advisory Council. His public health network and service in the Hawai'i State Dept. of Health contribute decades of experience in building this government agency's capacity to mobilize resources for underserved populations to address health disparities. Mr. Ohta has also served as an early member of the Inter-Agency Council for Immigrant and Refugee Services. In both these capacities, Mr. Ohta is in a strategic position to bring key people together to support the advisory council to achieve measurable deliverables in the enactment of the language access law. We encourage Mr. Ohta and the council members to devise opportunities for community participation in deliberating and prioritizing strategies under consideration to ensure community and systems support and accountability of civil rights.

Founded in 1959 to help Filipinos in Hawaii play a larger role in the State of Hawaii, the mission of the Council is to promote a sense of unity, friendship, camaraderie and mutual assistance among Filipinos in Hawaii while promoting and perpetuating the Filipino heritage and culture. Today, the Council consists of six Island Councils with jurisdiction over 100+ Filipino organizations and a combined membership of about 10,000 from every major island in the State.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Your help to confirm Mr. Ohta is much appreciated by the Filipino community.

*2006-07

**2007-08

Respectfully Submitted,

Bryan Andaya, UFCH President

Jeanne Y. Ohta

1016 A Hind Iuka Drive
Honolulu, HI 96821

March 7, 2008

To: Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Clayton Hee, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Re: Gerald Hisashi Ohta
Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Language Access Advisory
Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Gerald Hisashi Ohta, for a term to expire 6-30-
2012

Hearing: Friday, March 7, 2008, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 016

Position: Support Confirmation

Good morning Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Hee, and members of the Committee on
Judiciary and Labor. I am testifying today in support of the confirmation of Gerald Ohta
to the Language Access Advisory Council.

I first worked with Mr. Ohta while I was Interim Executive Director of the Commission
on the Status of Women. At that time he was an integral member of the Women's Health
Month Planning Committee and coordinator of the Department of Health's Committee on
the Status of Women. Prior he served as an *ex-officio* member of the Commission on the
Status of Women.

He has a wealth of knowledge and a broad perspective on a variety of issues: the different
forms of discrimination and harassment; civil rights; and access to services and
governmental agencies. He is also familiar with the challenges facing under-served and
disadvantaged populations.

He is also important to him to bring about improvements to current practices and
programs; and in making government programs and activities accessible to all of the
citizens of Hawaii so that everyone will have the opportunities they need to improve the
quality of their lives.

I know that he will not only be a dedicated member of the Language Access Advisory
Council, but that he will be a valuable resource for that council.

Please confirm his appointment. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.