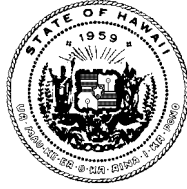


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 6, 2024

TO: The Honorable Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair  
Senate Committee on Labor & Technology

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2787 – RELATING TO IMMIGRATION.**

Hearing: February 7, 2024, 3:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 224, State Capitol & Video Conference

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, provides comments, and defers to the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations, the Office of Community Services, and the Office of Language Access. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** This bill establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit. Declares that the general fund expenditure is exceeded. Makes an appropriation.

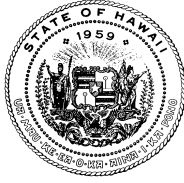
Immigrants in Hawaii are vital members of the community and make up a growing percentage of the workforce. No matter the reason for immigration, many immigrants faced hardships in their home countries to come to the United States to pursue their dreams and a better life for themselves and their families. Many immigrants have limited English proficiency (LEP), and seeking legal information and resources in English and navigating the government systems is difficult.

Reinvesting immigrant services in the OCS will support immigrant, migrant, and refugee populations transitioning to life in the United States. The Department also encourages the Legislature to provide funds to DLIR OCS to consider serving Hawaii's migrant populations. Importantly, having trustworthy immigrant services may also prevent harm perpetrated by the unfortunate elements of society who prey on vulnerable individuals and immigrants.

In addition to the cultural diversity that immigrants and migrants contribute that makes Hawaii a unique and vibrant place, the immigrant and migrant community brings additional experience, investment, and innovation that enhances our workforce and economy.

If the measure passes, DHS will collaborate with DLIR OCS to assist immigrant and migrant individuals and families to the extent allowable by law.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS**

1177 Alakea Street, Room B-100  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
Phone: (808) 586-8730 / Fax: (808) 586-8733  
doh.ola@doh.hawaii.gov

In reply, please refer to:  
File: 24-003

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2787  
RELATING TO IMMIGRATION**

SENATOR HENRY J.C. AQUINO, CHAIR  
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Hearing Date: 2/7/2024

Room Number: Conf. Room 224 &  
Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's  
2 Executive Supplemental Budget Request.

3 **Agency's Position:** The Office of Language Access (OLA) supports this measure, provided the  
4 measure's passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Governor's Executive  
5 Supplemental Budget Request and defers to the Office of Community Services (OCS) on  
6 implementation and resource needs.

7 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this measure is to establish and appropriate funds for  
8 the Immigrant Services and Access Unit within the Department of Labor and Industrial  
9 Relations' Office of Community Services (OCS) and to declare that the general fund expenditure  
10 is exceeded.

11 Hawaii is one of the most culturally diverse states and has one of the highest proportions of non-  
12 English speakers in the nation. Many of these non-English speakers are immigrants and migrants  
13 with limited English proficiency (LEP). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022  
14 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, it is estimated that 25.73%, or 351,542, of  
15 Hawaii's residents aged 5 years and older speak a language other than English at home. Of these,  
16 150,743, or 11.06%, indicated that they speak English "less than very well."

1 English proficiency, or the lack thereof, has a great impact on people's economic and social  
2 activities, and health literacy and wellness. It affects their ability to successfully access  
3 education, employment, and important public assistance, benefits, programs, and services.  
4 Establishing an immigrant service and access unit will provide a critical link for communication  
5 and make services accessible to individuals with limited English proficiency.

6 This measure will allow OLA to work closely with other partners to further improve language  
7 access in our state government. If the measure is passed, OLA will collaborate with OCS to  
8 assist immigrant and migrant individuals with limited English proficiency to the extent allowable  
9 by law.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

JOVANIE DOMINGO DELA CRUZ  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 420  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
[www.hawaii.gov/labor](http://www.hawaii.gov/labor)  
Phone: (808) 586-8675 / Fax: (808) 586-8685  
Email: [dliir.ocs@hawaii.gov](mailto:dliir.ocs@hawaii.gov)

IN REPLY, REFER TO:  
**OCS 24.1048**

February 6, 2024

To: The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair,  
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024  
Time: 3:00 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 224, State Capitol & Videoconference

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

Position: Support

**Re: S.B. 2787 - RELATING TO IMMIGRATION**

**I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

This bill would appropriate funds to the Office of Community Services (OCS) to provide for additional dedicated staff and additional program funds to direct OCS to establish an immigration services and access unit (hereinafter, sometimes “ISAU”) within OCS.

The bill would add a section to HRS Chapter 371K, which established OCS, to describe the purpose of the unit as to “promote immigrant economic self-sufficiency, community inclusion, and integration. The immigration services and access unit shall provide statewide services, coordinate with relevant government and nonprofit agencies, and approve contracts with qualified nonprofit organizations to support integration and civic engagement. The immigration services and access unit shall also be responsible for the immigrant resource centers, administration of the refugee program, and management of other programs relating to immigrants.”

The bill would appropriate sums, in amounts to be identified, for the new State fiscal year – FY 2024-2025, which starts on July 1, 2024. The funds would allow for one or more FTE staff in the ISAU plus additional funds for services to be provided by the ISAU. The bill also states that the appropriation is made in accordance with Hawaii State Constitution Art VII and HRS §§37-91 and 93 relating to appropriations that cause the general fund expenditure to be exceeded, and states that the appropriation is in the public interest and the appropriation made in this bill meets the needs addressed by the bill.

## **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 BILL**

OCS supports the intent of this bill, provided that appropriations would not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Governor's Executive Budget Request.

S.B. 2787 would reinforce the mandate that OCS already has pursuant to HRS Chapter 371K. Having a unit dedicated to coordinating and addressing the need of one of OCS's major service populations is very critical to ensuring that these population receives proper government and social services. The need for such coordinated services was highlighted during the recent Maui wildfires. Having the ISAU would help OCS fulfill one of its legislative mandates.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

To: Senate Committee on Labor and Technology  
Re: **SB 2787 – Relating to Immigration**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
February 7, 2024, 3:00 PM

Dear Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 2787**. This bill establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

During the pandemic, non-profit organizations like ours worked hard to help limited English proficiency (LEP) families access the federal pandemic relief benefits that they were qualified for. While working on this outreach, we learned that our state departments lack resources to provide meaningful language access for LEP families, and that the federal government and national advocacy organizations do not provide translations of key documents<sup>1</sup> in many of the languages that are the most spoken by LEP families in Hawai'i<sup>2</sup> – such as Ilocano, Marshallese, and Chuukese.

The unit proposed by this bill would help fill such gaps. It could 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.

As one of the states with the highest portion of foreign-born residents,<sup>3</sup> combined with the lack of existing resources for translations of government documents and outreach materials into many of the languages that are spoken most here, Hawai'i arguably needs to devote more resources to ensure language access to our government services than most other states. That's why this bill is so important.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo  
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/translated-applications>

<sup>2</sup> Hawai'i Data Exchange Partnership, [https://hawaiiidxp.org/quick\\_data/datastory/el](https://hawaiiidxp.org/quick_data/datastory/el)

<sup>3</sup> Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/312701/percentage-of-population-foreign-born-in-the-us-by-state/>



**Senate Committee on Labor and Technology**

**Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Support: SB2787**

Wednesday, February 7, 2024 3:00 p.m. Conference Room 224

Aloha Chair Sen. Aquino, Vice Chair Sen. Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology,

HAPA is writing in support of SB2787, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the state must take proactive measures to support their integration. The need for comprehensive services for immigrants is evident, considering the various issues they encounter upon arrival, ranging from language access and legal matters to acculturation challenges and employment searches. Hawaii has a significant number of new immigrants every year, as well as 18 percent of the population comprising immigrants, who have played an essential role in contributing to the state's economy, workforce, and community. The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB2787.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is positioned above the typed name.

Anne Frederick  
Executive Director





**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2787  
RELATING TO IMMIGRATION**

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 7, 2024

Dear Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) is in full **support of SB2787**, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

Immigrants are significant contributors to our State's economy. With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the State must take proactive measures to support their integration. They accounted for nearly 40 percent of agricultural workers and 33 percent of tourism, entertainment, and hospitality workers. They also constitute 68 percent of housekeeping workers, over half of all chefs and head cooks, 47 percent of all nursing assistants, and 20 percent of all physicians. Furthermore, immigrants contributed \$17.6 billion to our local economy in 2018 alone. Additionally, the same year, over \$874 million from immigrant households went to state and local taxes<sup>1</sup>. These figures underscore the significant economic impact of immigrants on our State's prosperity.

It is clear that immigrants are vital to the fabric of our communities and essential for our economy's continued growth and success. Despite their contributions, recent immigrants often

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<sup>1</sup> *Immigrants and Migrants in Hawai'i Essential Contributors to the State's Workforce and Economy*, Partnership for a New American Economy Research Fund, [research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/05/NAE\\_Hawaii\\_V7\\_FINAL.pdf](https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/05/NAE_Hawaii_V7_FINAL.pdf).



face numerous obstacles, including language barriers, legal issues related to their immigration status, and challenges with acculturation and integration. Providing comprehensive services to address these needs is not only a matter of compassion but also of practicality and economic sense. To fully realize the potential of our immigrant population, we must provide them with the necessary support and resources for integration and success.

The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services to ensure that recent immigrants receive the support they need to thrive in our communities. Investing in immigrant integration has proven benefits for our State. Immigrants who receive support and opportunities for economic self-sufficiency contribute more effectively to our workforce and economy as mentioned in the statistics above.

Importantly, this bill is not only about providing vital services but also about fiscal responsibility. By investing in immigrant integration, we can prevent long-term costs associated with unaddressed challenges, such as reliance on public assistance or underutilization of immigrant talent and potential. Moreover, by coordinating with existing resources and nonprofit organizations, we can maximize the impact of state funding.

We urge you to support this bill and ensure its swift passage for the well-being of Hawaii and all its residents.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Maria Rallojaj

Policy and Communications Coordinator



Testimony in support of SB 2787  
RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES  
Submitted by Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights,  
Co-chairs: Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman

Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members

Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights strongly supports SB2787 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 appreciate the legislature's approval of the Filipino Legislative Caucus priorities related to immigration services: HCR 169 (2021) and SB 2457(2022). We also appreciated consideration of bills in 2023 for an OCS immigrant service unit and funding (SB 812 and HB 439)

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 support SB 2787, which is one of the Filipino Legislative Caucus priority bills. SB 2787 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. Many

states and cities have an administrative organization, staffing and programs similar to the proposed Immigrant Services and Access.

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 Hawaii'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 support SB 2787 for it will benefit our state and immigrant communities.

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

**SB-2787**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 12:42:44 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/7/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Agnes Malate	Testifying for FilCom CARES	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HAWAI'I STATE LEGISLATURE**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of SB2787**

**RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND ACCESS UNIT**

**February 7, 2024 | 3:00 pm**

Dear Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology:

FilCom CARES was established to provide equitable access to health care for Filipinos and other vulnerable groups during the pandemic. We recognize immigrants were among the most severely impacted by the pandemic. FilCom CARES continues to serve the community and carry out its mission of growing a stronger and healthier Filipino community in Hawai'i through collaborative partnerships.

FilCom CARES strongly supports SB2787, which would establish an Immigrant Services and Access. We believe it will enhance the Office of Community Services' capacity to serve the immigrant community who face barriers to accessing government services and resources and are often excluded from full participation in our community.

We respectfully ask you to support SB 2787 for it will benefit not just the immigrant communities but our entire State.

Sincerely,

Agnes Malate, PhD

Co-chair, FilCom CARES



**SB-2787**

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 9:03:58 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/7/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

As the child of refugees and contributing citizen, I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2787, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the state must take proactive measures to support their integration. The need for comprehensive services for immigrants is evident, considering the various issues they encounter upon arrival, ranging from language access and legal matters to acculturation challenges and employment searches. Hawaii has a significant number of new immigrants every year, as well as 18 percent of the population comprising immigrants, who have played an essential role in contributing to the state's economy, workforce, and community. The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services.

In both my professional and personal life, I have witnessed the many needs of our immigrant communities, as well as the significant contributions they make to our local communities, both financially and culturally.

Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration of this bill.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

**SB-2787**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 12:54:05 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/7/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
wilfredo tungol	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Aquino and members of the Labor and Tech Committee:

My name is Wilfredo Tungol and I am submitting this testimony **in strong support** of bill SB2782. I am also the Director for Regon 11 (Hawaii) of the Filipino Vetrans Recognition and Education Project, a national non-profit organization that advocates for Filipino veterans of World War II and their families. I have also served on the board of director for ten years (1998-2008) on the Hawaii Immigration Justice Center (fka Na Loio). In those roles, I am quite familiar with the needs of recent immigrants to our state.

This bill will help create a unit within the Office of Community Service that will specificaly target recent immigrants to Hawaii. The bill help immigrants trthrough labor, social services, language access and legal issues that they may encounter. With the available assistance, recent immigrants can be assimilated and be a productive members of our society. Immigrants need a hand-up and not a hand out to help them in their journey to their new home. This bill will help facilitate that.

I respectfully ask that you vote in favor of this bill.

Mahalo,

Wilfredo Tungol, Esq.

Pearl City, Hawaii



**SB-2787**

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 11:17:11 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/7/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom. I live in Mō'ili'ili. I'm writing in STRONG SUPPORT SB2787.

me ke aloha 'āina,  
Nanea Lo

**LATE**

**LATE**



## HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

Defending and Respecting the workers of  
Hawaii'i

(503) WORKERS ☎

(503) 967- 5377 ☎

[hawaiiworkerscenter@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiiworkerscenter@gmail.com) ✉

Mail: 2252 Puna St., Honolulu, HI 96817 ✉

[hawaiiworkerscenter.org](http://hawaiiworkerscenter.org) 🌐

February 6, 2024

Hawaii'i State Senate  
Committee on Labor and Technology  
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

**Executive Board  
Committee**

Rev. Sam Domingo  
*Board Chair*

Mary Ochs  
*Vice Chair*

Dr. Arcelita Imasa  
*Secretary*

John Witeck  
*Treasurer*

**Board Members**

Yoko Liriano

Nanea Lo

Innocenta  
Sound-Kikku

Ray Catania

Justin Jansen

Leyton Torda

RE: SUPPORT for S.B. 2787 RELATING TO IMMIGRATION.

Dear Chair Sen. Aquino, Vice-Chair Sen. Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology:

The Hawaii'i Workers Center (HWC) envisions a Hawaii'i in which all workers are empowered to exercise their right to organize for their social, economic and political well-being. It is a resource of information, education, training and organizing for Hawaii's workers.

The HWC stands in support of S.B. 2787 which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

This unit is critical for our immigrant communities and for residents that are limited English proficient. The need for such a coordinated and dedicated unit was not only apparent during the pandemic in which many needing language access faced additional challenges navigating resources but more recently, in the devastating Maui wildfires just a few months ago. The immigrant and migrant communities were hit hard but language access was an afterthought rather than a priority.

For a place as culturally diverse as Hawaii'i, a dedicated Immigration Services and Access Unit just makes common sense.

**Executive Director**

Sergio Alcubilla III, Esq. We ask that you please pass and support S.B. 2787.

Sincerely,

Sergio Alcubilla  
Executive Director