



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
February 21, 2008 at 5:00 pm

By

Linda Johnsrud, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy,

HB 3398, HD2 – RELATING TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

I am Linda Johnsrud, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy, University of Hawai'i System. On behalf of the University System, I am testifying on House Bill 3398 House Draft 2, which appropriates funds to the vice chancellors for student affairs at University of Hawai'i campuses for shared resources for Philippine language and culture programs.

House Bill 3398 HD2 presents data about the representation of Filipinos in higher education and makes a compelling case for increasing the availability of Philippine language and culture programs and supporting recruitment and retention at the UH campuses.

While we agree with its intent, the University System cannot support HB3398 HD2 which appropriates funds to campus vice chancellors for student affairs for curriculum development and student services. As a general practice, chancellors are charged with the responsibility on their campuses for a process of establishing priorities and allocating resources, and we would prefer to honor this process of review and priority-setting at the campus level.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

P.O. Box 17531 • Honolulu • Hawaii 96817

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Hawaii Filipino Women's
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International Filipino
Society of Hawaii
Kalayaan Phil.-Hi. Int.
La Union Circle of
Hawaii
Lingayen Gulf Club of
Hawaii

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 3398 HD2

RELATING TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

House Finance Committee

Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair

Honorable Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair

Honorable House Finance Committee Members

February 21, 2008, 5 p.m. | Conference Room 308

To: Hon. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Hon. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair;
Hon. House Finance Committee Members

From: Franklin Borromeo
President, Oahu Filipino Community Council

My name is Franklin Borromeo. I am very proud to provide strong support of this bill. I serve as President of the Oahu Filipino Community Council (OFCC). Our Council 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.

Providing Philippine languages and ethnic studies throughout the University of Hawai'i's community college system and Hawai'i's public high schools is an important measure toward community empowerment for the benefit of all. It becomes a social justice issue when students, especially in schools with large numbers of Filipinos, are denied the right to learn their history, languages, and culture. OFCC supports education that will lead to greater collaborations and equity among Hawai'i's diverse people to help address the pressing needs of our global society.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. Your consideration to enact this proposed legislation is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Franklin Borromeo
President, Oahu Filipino Community Council

Unit Organizations

Magsingal Association of
Hawaii
Narvacan/San Antonio Club of
Hawaii
Nueva Vizcaya Association of
Hawaii
Pasuquinos Association of
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Hawaii
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School Alumni
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2007-2008 OFCC OFFICERS & BOARD President: **Franklin Borromeo** | 1st Vice President: **Cirvalina Longboy** | 2nd Vice President: **Carlotta Ader** Secretary: **Jean Jeremiah** | Assistant Secretary: **Veronica Esteban** | Treasurer: **Faye Cudal** | Assistant Treasurer: **Dolly Ortal** | Auditor: **Mario Palma** | Board of Directors: • **Aurea Agas** • **Filemon Castillo** • **Maria Etrata** • **Louie Funtanilla** • **Jake Manegdeg** • **Estrella Pada-Taong** • **Danny Villaruz** • **Amado Yoro** | Legal Counsel: **Alfredo Evangelista** |

Filipino American Citizens League

Jake Manegdeg, President
P. O. Box 270126 ★ Honolulu, Hawai'i 96827

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 3398 HD2 RELATING TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

House Finance Committee
Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Honorable Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Honorable House Finance Committee Members

February 21, 2008, 5 p.m.
Hawai'i State Capitol Conference Room 308

Title: Philippine Language and Filipino-American Studies

Description: Appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii system to provide Philippine language and Philippine-American studies courses systemwide. Appropriates funds. (HB3398 HD2)

To: Hon. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; Hon. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Hon. House Finance Committee Members
From: Jake Maegdeg, President, Filipino American Citizens League

My name is Jake Manegdeg. As president of the Filipino American Citizens League, I am proud to submit our full support of this bill. The Filipino American Citizens League was formed over ten years ago to contribute to the advancement of civil rights and social justice for minority groups, underserved populations, and vulnerable communities through education, advocacy, and social action.

I served as Chair of the 75th Anniversary Commission of Filipinos in Hawai'i, as well as a commissioner on the Filipino Centennial Celebration Commission. The achievements and contributions of Filipinos in Hawai'i since 1906 have been well documented. But the untold stories of alarming disparities are emerging in public health issues of domestic violence, incarceration, cancer, diabetes, cardio vascular diseases, unemployment, workers rights, and more.

After a hundred years, it is time to bring healing to Hawai'i's educational system that has failed our underserved communities, including Filipinos, by denying them the right to learn who they are, and where they came from. In so doing, Hawai'i's multi-ethnic students will also benefit from knowledge that will transform ignorance, fear, and racial strife into universal virtues. Provisions of this bill can foster the spirit of inquiry, self awareness, sense of belonging, empathy, compassion, unity and reciprocity for the greater good. Thank you for the opportunity to support this bill. Your help in its passage will bring about the type of profound change that is needed. Hawai'i cannot afford not to.

Very Sincerely,

Jake Manegdeg,
President, Filipino American Citizens League



Nursing Advocates & Mentors, Inc.

... a non-profit organization with a mission to address the global nursing shortage by providing guidance and assistance for nursing colleagues to obtain their professional license in nursing.

P.O. Box 2034 Aiea, HI 96701
E-mail: namihonolulu@yahoo.com

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 3398 HD2

RELATING TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

House Finance Committee

Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair

Honorable Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair

Honorable House Finance Committee Members

February 21, 2008, 5 p.m.

Hawai'i State Capitol Conference Room 308

To: Hon. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; Hon. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair; Hon. House Finance Committee Members

From: Beatrice Ramos-Razon, President, NAMI
(Nursing, Advocates & Mentors, Inc.)

My name is Beatrice Ramos Razon. I am in strong support of this bill. As the founder and president of NAMI (Nursing, Advocates & Mentors, Inc.). NAMI's membership is comprised of over 75 nurses, allied health care professionals, and Filipino leaders, who are dedicated to improve the health of Hawaii's people by addressing the global issues of a worldwide nursing shortage through the training and mentoring of foreign medical graduate nurses to pass Hawai'i's nurses board exams.

Language access to government services is of grave importance to Hawai'i's diverse immigrant groups. Filipinos comprise 61 percent of immigrants, which is larger than all the other immigrant groups combined. Offering Philippine languages and Filipino American studies will perpetuate and promote heritage language speakers, who are at risk for losing their language skills, if they are not used. These emerging leaders are an overlooked resource that not only have tremendous potential for success, but are essential to Hawai'i's vibrant economic future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for this bill. NAMI appreciates consideration of your support.

Sincerely,

Bea Ramos-Razon, RN,
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Beatrice Ramos Razon, RN,
FACDA
President, Nursing Advocates
and Mentors, Inc.

CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS

99-1325 Aiea Heights Drive, Aiea, HI 96701

Founded 1985

TO: Rep. Marcus Oshiro
Chair, House Committee on Finance

DATE OF HEARING: Tuesday, February 21, 2008
5:00 p.m., House Conference Room 308

SUBJECT: Testimony in strong support of HB3398 HD2

Mr. Chair, Vice-Chair, and members of the House Committee on Finance. My name is Margarita L. Hopkins, president of the Congress of Visayan Organizations, the statewide umbrella of Visayan organizations in Hawaii.

I am testifying in strong support of HB3398 HD2, Relating to Foreign Language Programs, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii system for the offering of Philippine languages and Philippine-American studies in the UH system and high schools. We believe that this bill, if adopted, will help promote and heighten interest in Philippine languages and culture, will provide a solid grounding for Filipino-Americans who are in search of their Philippine roots, and also improve representation of the Filipino-American student population in the University of Hawaii system.

We therefore urge your committee to approve this bill.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Very truly yours,

MARGARITA HOPKINS
President

Hawaii Interpreter Action Network
c/o Hawaii Newspaper Guild
888 Mililani Street, Room 303, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TO: Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: M. Alohalani Boido, M. A., Chair
Legislative Action Committee, Hawaii Interpreter Action Network
Tel.: 946-2558, E-mail: boido@hawaii.edu

HEARING: February 21, 2008; 5 p.m., Rm. 308

RE: **SUPPORT, HB 3398 HD 2**, Relating to Foreign Language Programs

I am Marcella Alohalani Boido, M. A., a Hawaii Judiciary Certified court interpreter (Spanish & English) and a founding member of Hawaii Interpreter Action Network (HIAN). HIAN is dedicated to representing Hawaii's court interpreters. We work to elevate professional standards of competence and ethics, and to improve working conditions.

The bill itself states the reasons why it should be enacted. We are in support because a major part of demand for language services in Hawaii is for Filipino languages.

Bilingual workers, and interpreters and translators, are drawn from one of three groups: 1) immigrants who were highly educated in their home country before arriving in the U.S., 2) immigrant children and children of immigrants who largely learn their Language Other Than English (LOTE) at home ("heritage speakers"), and 3) speakers who learn their LOTE at school in the USA.

For all three groups, formal study in school is needed to develop the high level of language knowledge necessary to provide competent bilingual services. Groups 2 and 3, above, rely on the American school system for the necessary formal study. The very expensive alternative is to travel for study to the country where the language is spoken.

To create high-level Hawaii-raised and Hawaii-educated speakers in Filipino languages, we need these formal opportunities for schooling.

These Hawaii-raised and Hawaii-educated people are among those most likely to go on to provide very needed bilingual services in government and non-profit offices as staff, as well as interpreter and translator services to government offices, the community, and business. Such services are essential to providing language access to government services and linguistic due process in the courts, as well as facilitating international commerce.

HB 3398 HD 2 provides an economical and sensible way to educate people in languages essential to Hawaii's provision of government services and the development of international commerce. It also serves to give people a source of pride and joy in their culture and identity for Filipinos, and the joy of learning for the rest of us.

Please support HB 3398 HD 2. Hawaii needs this bill. Thank you.



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 Kailokuan iti
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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
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Cavitenians of Hawaii
Dingras Association of
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Divine Word College
Alumni Association
FilAm Sports USA
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of Hawaii
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Society of Hawaii
Kalayaan Phil.-Hi. Int.
La Union Circle of
Hawaii
Lingayen Gulf Club of
Hawaii

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 3398 HD2
RELATING TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS**

House Finance Committee

Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair

Honorable Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair

Honorable House Finance Committee Members

February 21, 2008, 5 p.m.

Hawai'i State Capitol Conference Room 308

To: Hon. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; Hon. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair; Hon.
House Finance Committee Members

From: Helena Manzano, Board Member
National Federation of Filipino American Associations Region XII

My name is Helena Manzano. National Federation of Filipino American Associations Region XII (NaFFAA) is in strong support of this bill. I serve on the Board of NaFFAA 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.

The Ethnic Studies movement nationwide has played a critical role in producing topnotch thinkers and doers, who have advanced civil rights and socially responsible economic empowerment initiatives in the United States. This bill supports Hawai'i's institutions of secondary and higher education to carry out its mission to prepare students to turn around the demands of a complex and troubled world into opportunities of peace and prosperity for all. Philippine languages and ethnic studies programs are essential to move forward.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony to support this bill. Please vote yes to its passage.

Sincerely,

Helena Manzano, Board Member, NaFFAA Region XII



UNITED FILIPINO COUNCIL OF HAWAII

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

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 3398 HD2 RELATING TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

House Finance Committee
Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Honorable Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Honorable House Finance Committee Members

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February 21, 2008, 5 p.m. | Conference Room 308

Title: Philippine Language and Philippine-American Studies

Description: Appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii system to provide Philippine language and Filipino-American studies courses systemwide. Appropriates funds. (HB3398 HD2)

To: Hon. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; Hon. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair;
Hon. House Finance Committee Members

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

My name is Bryan Andaya. I am the president of the United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH). I submit this testimony to support HB 3398 HD 2 on behalf of UFCH, an umbrella organization with member organizations from six islands. Current membership includes a total of 5,000 individual members.

At our annual convention in July 2007, our delegates passed a resolution to offer Philippine languages and history in Hawai'i's community colleges and high schools, especially in communities with large Filipino populations. We are pleased to do all we can to support your leadership to advance this initiative. The study of ethnic studies and languages is at the core of democracy and a foundation in education. It is also the civil rights of America's diverse peoples to learn about their own history.

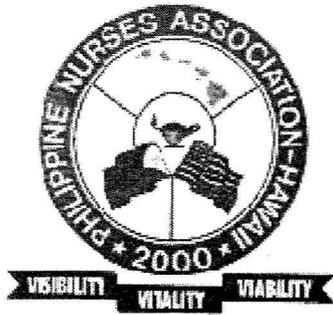
Filipinos in Hawai'i want to contribute to the successful progress of social and global prosperity and peace in the 21st century. Please help us make this possible for all of Hawai'i's emerging youth leaders and children by passing this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan P. Andaya, President

*2006-07

**2007-08



Tessie Oculito, RN, President
Philippine Nurses Association-Hawaii
92-1269 Umana St. | Kapolei, HI 96707
E-Mail: toculto@hawaii.rr.com | Phone: (808) 457-1066

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 3398 HD2 RELATING TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

House Finance Committee
Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Honorable Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Honorable House Finance Committee Members

February 21, 2008, 5 p.m.
Conference Room 308

To: Hon. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; Hon. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair;
Hon. House Finance Committee Members
From: Tessie Oculito, President, Philippine Nurses Association Hawaii

My name is Tessie Oculito. I am the president of the Philippine Nurses Association-Hawaii (PNAH). We are in strong support of this bill. As a national affiliate of the Philippine Nurses Association of America, our shared mission is to uphold and foster the positive image and welfare of our constituent members; to promote professional excellence and contribute to significant outcomes to healthcare and society. Our vision is to be an organization responsive to its constituent needs, and to be a force in the world arena of nursing.

Most of our members are first generation Filipinos, who immigrated to the United States because of the global nursing shortage. We see the harmful effects of the extinction of heritage language among generations of Hawai'i's multi-ethnic groups, including Filipinos. American families and the U.S. labor force are at an economic disadvantage because of insufficient cultural and linguistic competencies for critical transactions ranging from inter-generation family discord, to patients with health care providers, to brokering and closing socially responsible and mutually prosperous business deals.

We support this bill because students from diverse backgrounds in public schools and higher education will become informed of each other's historical lessons and worldview through their languages. This type of cutting edge education provides a strategic vantage point for an enlightened society to champion global challenges.

Sincerely,

Tessie Oculito, RN
President, Philippine Nurses Association-Hawaii



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 STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 3398 HD2 RELATING TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

House Finance Committee
Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Respective House Finance Committee Members

February 21, 2008 · 5 p.m. · Hawai'i State Capitol Conference Room 308

To: Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Respective House Finance Committee Members
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 this bill. 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.

As a third generation descendant of sakadas, or sugarcane contract workers, and as a product of Hawai'i's public schools during its territorial days, I never learned my Philippine language of Ilokano, nor Philippine history, although my school and community were comprised predominantly of Filipinos. Instead, German, French, Spanish and Japanese were offered. My education and purpose in life crystallized during student protests and civil disobedience to save the University of Hawai'i Ethnic Studies program, and to denounce the naming of the social science building after Australian psychologist Stanley Porteus. His research promoted the superior intelligence quotients (IQs) of Caucasians, beginning with comparisons to Australian Aborigines, then with Hawai'i's plantation labor force of Hawaiians, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos. These conclusions justified racist, institutional policies by the Hawai'i Board of Education, which tracked minority students into vocational classes to meet the labor needs of low paying jobs with poor working conditions in the agricultural and service industries.

Ethnic Studies and Philippine languages are the keys to unlock historical truths and relevance to a child's life by reclaiming a people's integrity, developing an ethical and compassionate character, and building critical thinking skills for civic engagement in democracy to uphold civil rights.

The Coalition has passed resolutions to address disparities related to health, education, labor issues affecting the hotel and caregiver industries, immigration, Filipino WWII veterans equity, language access, and more. This bill will foster diversity competency for all of Hawai'i's people. Community empowerment for progressive collaborations to meet the challenges of local and global opportunities in the 21st century will follow.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our support of this bill from the Filipino community. Your consideration for its passage is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma, President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

PATRICIA J. HARPSTRITE
Spanish/English Translation and Interpretation
FEDERALLY CERTIFIED COURT INTERPRETER

46-045 Kuneki Pl., Kaneohe, HI 96744
harpstrij001@hawaii.rr.com

Phone/Fax: (808) 247-3578
Cell Phone: (808) 347-8249

TO: Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-chair
House Committee on Finance.

RE: **Support, HB 3398**, Relating to Foreign Language Programs
Hearing: Thursday, 02/21/08, 5:00 p.m., House Conference Room 308

For much of our country's history, the US education system has worked hard to extinguish the languages immigrants bring with them in order to create a nation of monolingual English speakers. We can no longer afford to continue this practice in today's increasingly global economy with its need for professionals and business people who can communicate effectively in languages other than English. The most effective way to fill this need is to encourage "heritage speakers" to develop their skills in the non-English language they learned at home.

Anyone who has learned a foreign language only by taking classes in high school or college realizes that it takes many years of study, probably combined with study abroad, to acquire the fluency required to use the language effectively for anything beyond basic communication. On the other hand, most bilingual persons who learned a non-English language only by speaking with parents or grandparents are well aware of the limitations of the language skills they acquired at home. Without formal education in the language, they probably lack skills in reading and writing, as well as the level of vocabulary and cultural knowledge required to communicate effectively in the language for business and professional purposes.

During my 35 years as a foreign language educator, I have been a strong supporter of providing students from immigrant families with the opportunity for formal education in their "heritage language" so that they can become truly bilingual. Now in my "second career" as a certified court interpreter, I am keenly aware of the need for educated "heritage speakers" who can serve as interpreters or bilingual staff in our courts, hospitals, and community agencies to provide linguistic access to speakers of limited English proficiency. Educated heritage speakers can also fulfill the need for foreign language communication in many areas, from tourism to international law and diplomacy.

In Hawaii, Filipinos represent 14% of the total population, many of whom have grown up in homes where one or more Filipino languages are spoken. These students deserve the opportunity to become literate in their heritage language and knowledgeable about the history and culture of their ancestors. Just as important is the fact the Hawaii needs professionals with this kind of linguistic and cultural knowledge who can function effectively in our local multi-ethnic environment and in the global economy.

Please support HB 3398.

Thank you,

Patricia J. Harpstrite, M. A.
Federally Certified Court Interpreter (Spanish and English)
Professor Emeritus, Leeward Community College

UNITE HERE! LOCAL 5 HAWAII

Eric Gill, Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Hernando Ramos Tan, President

Godfrey Maeshiro, Senior Vice-President

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair
Representative Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

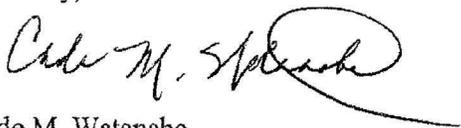
In support of HB 3398, HD 2; relating to foreign language programs.

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, members of the House Committee on Finance, I submit this testimony on behalf of UNITE HERE! Local 5 – a local labor organization representing nearly 12,000 hotel and health care workers throughout our State. In fact, nearly 65% of our members are of Filipino ancestry.

If enacted, this bill would help to address the fact that Filipinos remain underrepresented in positions of higher education in our State's university system. More importantly, this bill encapsulates our members' desires and demonstrates our State's commitment towards consistently offering courses on Filipino-American ethnic and Philippine studies – an integral piece in unlocking our shared history and struggles as a people with roots in the agricultural and service industries.

On behalf of our nearly 12,000 members statewide I thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of HB 3398 HD 2.

Sincerely,



Cade M. Watanabe
Community/Political Organizer

Eric C. Gross
Assistant Professor
Language, Science & Technology
Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center
Presidio of Monterey, California 93944

TO: Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair; Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-chair
House Committee on Finance.

RE: **Support, HB 3398 HD 2**, Relating to Foreign Language Programs

HEARING: Thursday, 02/21/08, 5:00 p.m., House Conference Room 308

My name is Eric Gross. Until recently, I had the great pleasure to live and work in the state of Hawai'i. Before my move to the mainland, I was able to render service to the Hawai'i State Judiciary as a Tagalog Interpreter.

I had lived in Hawai'i for several years assuming my efforts or relative expertise in Philippine languages would not be needed at the state level since the state has a large Filipino community. When I did become involved as a Tagalog Interpreter/Translator with private agencies such as Child and Family Service and with the state courts, I was surprised at the relative lack of heritage speakers of different Philippine languages, given Hawai'i's large Filipino immigrant population. During this time, I became acquainted with many second and third generation Filipino-Americans who had very low proficiency in a language connected to their familial roots in the Philippines, especially when it came to applying language for discourse and evaluating the world around them.

The ties that Hawai'i has to the Philippines are well known. With such a large Filipino immigrant population, the state should do what it can to ensure that foreign language programs at the high school and college level offer curricula which will enhance the capability of Filipino-American youth in the state to reach a level of language proficiency such that they can step in and take on roles where they will be able to reach out both to linguistically isolated elderly Filipinos and to new immigrants who will arrive in Hawai'i from the Philippines. If Hawai'i schools offer these language programs, the youth will have a stronger sense of self and pride in their heritage. Beyond the personal level, they will be able to provide a service to Hawai'i as they reach out to help the state and thereby widen the bridge of understanding between the family level of orientation and the greater multi-ethnic community of Hawai'i. Hawai'i's position in the Asia-Pacific region should motivate it to support and push any legislation which will positively impact the linguistic capability of the state's high school and college aged young people.

Please support HB 3398 HD 2. Mahalo.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 3398

February 21, 2008, 5:00 PM
Conference Room 308
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

**RELATING TO PHILIPPINE LANGUAGES AND
PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN ETHNIC STUDIES**

To: **COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**
House of Representatives
FINtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

Rep. MARCUS OSHIRO, chair
Rep. MARILYN B. LEE, vice chair

From: **Rachelle Aurellano**
President, Timpuyog: Ilokano Student Organization
Ilokano Language and Literature Program
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

I am Rachelle Aurellano, President of Timpuyog: Ilokano Student Organization, an organization of all students enrolled in the various courses of the Ilokano Language and Literature Program of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. My statement—a strong support for HB 3398—does not reflect the official position of the University but is premised on the realization that this Bill, when implemented, will certainly address the issue of language access and linguistic rights of many of the peoples of the Philippines who are in Hawaii, or of Filipino Americans who descended from the peoples of the Philippines. I wish to make note here that the Ilokanos form a big chunk—*about 85% percent of all Filipinos in the State of Hawaii*—of the Filipinos of this State and this Bill will guarantee their access to the gifts and graces of their culture through their access to their heritage language.

As a student of Ilokano, and as President of the student organization, I realize the need for us to have more and more heritage courses in Ilokano, not only at this University campus in Manoa, but also in the various campuses of this University.

This Bill, I am convinced, will address the issues of diversity, language access, and cultural rights, issues that are important in our life in this State. Thank you so much for this opportunity.