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TO: Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
Honorable Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Health

Honorable John Mizuno, Chair
Honorable Tom Brower, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Human Services

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

RE: **Testimony in Support of HCR13 / HR17**
Hearing: March 17, 2009, 10:45 p.m., Conference Room 329

I. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT PROPOSED LEGISLATION

HCR13 and its companion measure HR17 urge the legislature to request the State Executive Office on Aging and the Center on Aging at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to continue their research and analyses of unresolved issues relating to aging and to report on their findings before the Regular Session of 2010. This includes developing a cash and counseling model; determining how best to compensate caregivers for respite services; determining best practices; enhancing funding from all sources for Medicaid and Medicare services; determining how to accommodate language barriers and overcome access to long-term care services barriers; and identifying funding sources.

II. HCR13 / HR17

The Office of Language Access supports the intent of HCR13 and its companion measure HR17.

Almost 35%, or more than 45,000 people, of the limited English proficient (LEP) population in Hawaii (130, 761) are elderly (60 years and above), according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey. The availability of language access through an interpreter or bilingual caregiver staff is a vital component for Hawai'i's aging LEP population as they seek to understand and make decisions on their health care. The OLA supports the intent of these measures to the extent that they further the goals of the state Language Access Law (enacted by the Legislature in 2006 and signed into law by Governor Lingle) to ensure meaningful access to state-funded services, programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.