(Audience applause.)

EMCEE HOWARD: Thank you so much, Elfriede. That was very enlightening for me too. I've done a little bit of interpretation of the (indiscernible) the court, but not that degree.

So to recap, you're talking, it sounds like you're talking about --. Well, I thought it was interesting that most of the Micronesians' first introduction to the legal system here is when we get in trouble with the law and how maybe some of that can be avoided with language issues being bridged across English and the other Micronesian languages.

So I hear you largely talking about access in terms of language, the importance of translating the legal vocabulary. And thank you for your hard work in you're doing right now in translating (indiscernible) you are for the Chuukese. Hopefully, it's a model for some of our other Micronesian languages. And thank you for the policy recommendations that you're making.

And I have also often wondered about that possibility of the Micronesian driver's licenses being accepted here in Hawai`i. But thank you very much.

So moving to our next panelist, we have Ms. Emma Reimers. Emma comes from the Marshall Islands where she was born and raised. Her mother comes from Arno, and her father comes from Majuro.
She works at Big Brothers and Big Sisters as a mentor who interviews all incoming families and matches the children with a mentor or big brother or big sister. I've always wondered what a big brother or big sister was, but Emma explained to me earlier, they're mentors.

She came to Hawai`i six years ago to attend college and is currently pursuing her master's degree in social work at Hawai`i Pacific University.

For the last eight months, she has been a student intern at the Lighthouse Outreach Center in Waipahu, which is a shelter supporting people in need, including people who are homeless. And today, she is here to share about what she does at the lighthouse center and is not here as a representative of Big Brothers Big Sisters.

THE LIGHTHOUSE OUTREACH CENTER

BY MS. EMMA REIMERS:

Hi, everyone. (Speaking in foreign language.)

So I'm at the Lighthouse Outreach Center which is an emergency shelter out in Waipahu. We have about 95 percent Micronesians that reside at the shelter. We serve both families, couples, and singles. And we as case managers, students interning there, we help our clients with their basic needs, such as housing, finding healthcare, jobs, further education. Just about anything that they may need.

And I would like to piggyback on what Elfriede was
saying about translating forms for Micronesians to better understand, 'cause we have a policy form that we give rules and regulations for our clients. And I was just mentioning the other day too, one of my classmates, like maybe we should translate (indiscernible) to Chuukese and Marshallese because we cannot assume that they're going to understand English.

And I (indiscernible) a lot of you are looking up here, like, she's Micronesian? I get that a lot. Everyone always (indiscernible), you don't look Micronesian. Well, I am.

So anyway, we help our clients become self-sufficient, by helping them budgeting their money because with Hawai`i Public Housing (voice fades) of their income.

And I would also like to thank Barb (audience interruption) for all your help from the Department of Health. They come to our shelter once a month and (voice fades). And she's really helpful and always, if she finds out that any of her clients need other services, she's always working with us and helping us (voice fades). So thank you very much.

And also, with Josie Howard from Imi Loa, she's also been very successful with us, with her resource of (indiscernible) clients with job training, employment services, and other resource and referrals. So it's really helpful to have her and Mary Milne, who's Marshallese, to help our clients who are from those islands.

And sorry. I'm really nervous today.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're doing fine.

CONTINUED BY MS. REIMERS:

So I guess I would like to share a little story with you guys about myself. When I first moved to Hawai`i, I faced a lot of the challenges that a lot of Micronesians face when they move here. I was always, I came here, just like Hilda Heine, I came here. I came here for school (indiscernible) and a place to live.

But, and then my sister had brought me (indiscernible) to prepare me, to make sure I had everything in mind before school started. She walked me to the registration office; and the counselor's talking to me. I'm like, (indiscernible), tell her that. She's like, Emma, you have to speak for yourself. Like what are you gonna do if I leave (indiscernible). No, I'm scared.

I was always scared of speaking out, even in class, asking questions with the teachers. I was afraid that it took me a long time to come out of my shell and be able to ask those questions.

And those are some things that a lot of the students at the Lighthouse Outreach, they're always asking, how come they never ask questions or how come they never say anything? It's not that they're, you know, being disrespectful. But it's part of their culture.

And we have a word that's called (speaking in...
foreign language) which is asking too many questions. And for a
child, it's okay for them to ask as many questions. But for an
adult to ask too many questions is kind of considered rude or
disrespectful.

So I hope that can help some of you (indiscernible),
some of you had that question, working with other Micronesians.

Another question that always comes up is we tend to
always nod our head saying (demonstrating.) And a lot of us
think, okay, they understand. But really, they don't
understand, but they're just, you know, showing respect. That's
part of being afraid to ask questions.

So anyway, I'm not sure what else. I'm so nervous.

* * * *

MS. SEGAL: And I'm learning a lot. And I'm
Micronesian, so you must be doing great.

MS. REIMERS: I guess I'll stop there (voice
trailing).

MS. SEGAL: Thank you very much.

(Audience applause.)

MS. SEGAL: (Indiscernible) talking about, you touched
also about the importance of language access with the policies,
and I think that's a really important message. And for those of
you who were here yesterday, (indiscernible) part of my
presentation, actually, I tried to show projects that were
created for and by Micronesian children and teachers, all in the
native language. So we know we are here --.

Actually, English in the official language in the
SFM because the Chuukese speak Chuukese, the Kosraean speak
Kosraean, and the Pohnpeian speak Pohnpeian, and the Yapese
speak Yapese. Maybe in the Marshalls, it's Marshallese.

So realize (indiscernible) purpose of English --
so I'm thinking more bilingual (indiscernible) helping our
people to understand the English, but also bridging, you know --
bridging two and two. That's what we're here for.

I also hear you talking about the importance of
the collaboration that's happening between the nonprofits and
service providers. And that's most of you here in the audience.
So congratulations for all of that awesome collaboration, and I
hope that continues.

And some what of I'm seeing happening yesterday
and today during the breaks, and probably at lunchtime and maybe
the reception tonight, is the networking and the passing out of
the business cards. So if you didn't bring your business cards,
make sure you start writing out your numbers on small notes of
paper.

And then I also hear you talking about the
knowledge of knowing or being familiar with Micronesian body
language and ways of being. And it's so true because, again,
some topics that we've already touched on, you're going to be
working with Micronesian people. You know, the Micronesians

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come from an oral society, like maybe all of the rest of the
Pacific. And so a lot of our communication is done indirectly.

And you know, I'm half-American and I even
remember visiting family in America, and they would say, gosh,
it's so interesting how the Micronesians communicate. You're,
like, doing eyebrow things and (audience interruption) with your
nose. And we don't even realize that we do that because that's
just, you know, from birth until now.

So you're probably laughing because you've seen
some of this with the Micronesians and you're hearing from the
panelists and then (indiscernible). And as you continue to work
with Micronesians, you will learn more. And please share that
with the other non-Micronesians trying to help the Micronesians.

So anyway, thank you so much (indiscernible) for
those insightful information.

Now moving on to our third panelist, we have
Ms. Brengyei Katosang. And she comes from the beautiful islands
of Palau which is a northernmost island nation in the region of
Micronesia.

She has lived in Hawai`i for about four years
now. She first came here to Hawai`i to go to law school here at
the University of Hawai`i, William S. Richardson School of Law.
She is currently staff attorney at the Legal Aid Society of
Hawai`i here on O`ahu. She just took her bar exam at the end of
February. So we'll all pray for the good news in May that she