

1 (Audience applause.)

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

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

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

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

22 So moving to our next panelist, we have Ms. Emma
23 Reimers. Emma comes from the Marshall Islands where she was
24 born and raised. Her mother comes from Arno, and her father
25 comes from Majuro.

1 She works at Big Brothers and Big Sisters as a
2 mentor who interviews all incoming families and matches the
3 children with a mentor or big brother or big sister. I've
4 always wondered what a big brother or big sister was, but Emma
5 explained to me earlier, they're mentors.

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

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

15 THE LIGHTHOUSE OUTREACH CENTER

16 BY MS. EMMA REIMERS:

17 Hi, everyone. (Speaking in foreign language.)

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

25 And I would like to piggyback on what Elfriede was

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

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

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

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

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

25 And sorry. I'm really nervous today.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're doing fine.

2 CONTINUED BY MS. REIMERS:

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

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

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

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

25 And we have a word that's called (speaking in

1 foreign language) which is asking too many questions. And for a
2 child, it's okay for them to ask as many questions. But for an
3 adult to ask too many questions is kind of considered rude or
4 disrespectful.

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

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

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

13 * * * * *

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

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

18 MS. SEGAL: Thank you very much.

19 (Audience applause.)

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

1 native language. So we know we are here --.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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