



My name is Seonae Byeon, Public Housing Organizer at CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities. On behalf of hundreds of our members that are low income immigrants living in Chinatown and in Queensbridge, we support the amendment to the city charter that would require city agencies to create a language access plan and practices so that LEP communities, mostly immigrants, can benefit from the services just like everybody else.

As part of our work with Asian tenants living in public housing, language access has been one of our most important issues. When we started registering Asian tenants living in NYCHA to vote, we found out that their first concern was that they were limited in their understanding and information because of the lack of language access. In 2015, we released a report called No Access, which detailed the deficiencies in NYCHA's language access policy and suggested recommendations for NYCHA to improve.

The reason we feel so strongly about this issue is that information is key in any democracy. And if people are not given the information, then it makes it difficult for them to play their part in a democracy. In the political climate we have now of bans and raids against immigrants, it is even more important that LEP individuals who are mostly immigrants be able to access services that can help them sustain healthy and stable communities.

We would like to emphasize that city agencies need to find creative ways to communicate to LEP communities that they provide language access services in their languages. When agencies figure out what languages to focus on as their top 10 or 6, they count how many people speaking a certain language attempt to use their services. But if people aren't informed that city agencies provide language access in the first place, and then LEP individuals don't even bother to use the services and hence their language needs and numbers are underreported.

We suggest that city agencies reach out to ethnic media and press as well as other community organizations to get the word out that the city has people that speak their language. You will likely reach a lot more in the community than simply posters or flyers.

We believe this amendment is a step in the right direction to include our LEP populations more thoroughly in the city's fabric. Thank you for your time.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leonard Byron

Address: 55 Hester St NY

I represent: CAAAV

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆