



**U.S. Department of Justice**

**Civil Rights Division**

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*Federal Coordination and Compliance Section  
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW-NWB  
Washington, DC 20530*

April 21, 2016

Mr. Steven Brown  
Executive Director  
ACLU of Rhode Island  
128 Dorrance Street, Suite 220  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: DJ # 171-66-2

Dear Mr. Brown:

This is to inform you that the Department of Justice is closing the case against the Rhode Island court system. As you know, this office investigated the complaint filed by the ACLU of Rhode Island against the Rhode Island Judiciary (RIJ) for failing to provide language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency. We then negotiated the provisions of Executive Order 2012-05, by which the Chief Justice ordered that appropriate language assistance be provided at no charge in all court proceedings as well as court services and programs. Thereafter, the Chief Justice appointed the Language Access Committee to provide input on the Language Access Plan and implementation of the Executive Order from various interests within RIJ as well as externally, including organizations such as the Public Defender, RI Legal Services, the state bar association, and the Center for Southeast Asians. In April 2014, we approved the provisions of the court's Language Access Plan and entered into a Voluntary Resolution Agreement with RIJ.

My staff monitored the RIJ's progress for the following two years and when needed took action to remedy implementation problems. RIJ has completed the work agreed to in the Agreement and Plan, and recently confirmed that "RIJ will permanently retain its policy of providing appropriate, qualified language assistance in all proceedings and court operations at no cost to limited English proficient persons in accordance with the terms contained" in the Executive Order, Language Access Plan, and Agreement. The conditions for closure having been fulfilled, the Agreement has terminated, and the case is now closed.

We appreciate the ongoing input provided by RI ACLU during the investigation, resolution, and monitoring phases of the case. As you know, a host of other individuals and organizations were instrumental to the process, including those serving on the stakeholder committee and members of the Olneyville Neighborhood Association. The resulting benefits for limited English proficient court users, the public, and the court itself will be substantial and enduring.

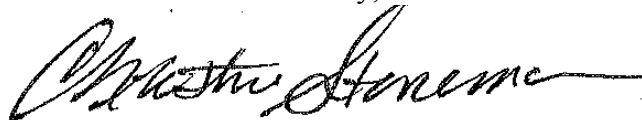
This letter relates only to the complaint referred to above; it does not address other actual or potential claims of discrimination that may arise from the activities of the RIJ. DOJ represented the interests of the United States in this matter and did not represent RI ACLU. Our actions do not affect any rights that RI ACLU may have to pursue its allegations in a private lawsuit in a court of law.

Please be aware that no one may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or engage in other discriminatory conduct against anyone who has either taken action or participated in an action to secure rights protected by the civil rights laws DOJ enforces. The protection against retaliation extends to employees of the entity receiving federal financial assistance who provide information or otherwise cooperate with DOJ's review. Any individual who alleges such harassment or intimidation may file a complaint with DOJ. We would investigate such a complaint if the situation warrants.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release information and related correspondence and records shared by recipients and complainants upon request. In the event that we receive such a request, we will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personal information that, if released, could constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact attorney Paul M. Uyhara at [paul.uyehara@usdoj.gov](mailto:paul.uyehara@usdoj.gov) or (202) 305-9813.

Sincerely,



Christine Stoneman  
Acting Chief

cc: Peter F. Neronha  
United States Attorney

Shannah Kurland, Esq.  
PrYSM - Providence Youth Student Movement

Channavy Chhay  
Center for Southeast Asians

Matthew Toro, Esq.  
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