

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Danilo Reyes, a Filipino permanent resident. I am working as Teaching Assistant at City U where I am also a PhD Candidate. I completed my Master's degree in Law at Hong Kong U.

Hong Kong is my home. I am here to express my deep concern on discriminatory practices in recruitment of professional non-Chinese speakers.

I reviewed several online job posts. I noticed that there is a de facto mandatory requirement of Chinese proficiency. Job posts by English teaching and research institutions also requires Chinese proficiency, and in private and nongovernment organizations.

Mr. Chairman, I understand if Chinese institutions require Chinese proficiency. But I do not understand why Chinese proficiency is required by English institutions. I agree that professional non-Chinese speakers should acquire language skills to be qualified. However, without support on language training that is free and accessible, it can hardly be done. I myself had no access to Chinese language training, even if I wanted to learn. How could I acquire the skills without training?

In absence of language support for non-Chinese speakers, Chinese proficiency requirements in recruitment effectively excludes us from the job market.

Mr. Chairman, my two children lives and studies in Hong Kong. They are able to speak, read and write Chinese because I invested money for their education. The government's vision to integrate ethnic minorities in commendable. However, integration of ethnic minority children also depends on their parent's income.

I was told that yet another family of Filipino residents is leaving Hong Kong. Once the parents either lose job or could not get a job because of language requirements, their children also had to leave Hong Kong. This is a familiar pattern among Filipino residents. I am worried this could also happen to my family.

For a Filipino professional, on top of language barriers, I had to tackle racial bias, stereotypes and prejudice. I am not an expatriate. I cannot change how people see me, but I strongly think this Committee and the government can do something to equalize opportunities in employment.

In my view, proficiency in Chinese language should not be mandatory if the work can be done in English. If it is required, then there should be language support to non-Chinese speakers so they could meet the criteria.

I urge the Equal Opportunities Commission to review and set guidelines on Chinese proficiency as criteria in recruitment. I know that even the EOC requires Chinese proficiency in their recruitment.

Lastly, the Education Department should set up a Chinese language courses that is free and accessible for non-Chinese speaking residents.

Thank you.