

GM281



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

HONOLULU

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

**TESTIMONY OF
LINDA L. SMITH**

Senior Policy Advisor to the Governor

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING

Friday, March 13, 2009, 2:00 p.m.
Room 225, State Capitol

in consideration of
GM 281
Gubernatorial Nominee Sam Aiona

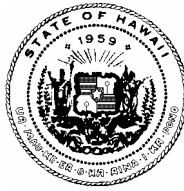
Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

My name is Linda L. Smith and I serve as Governor Lingle's Senior Policy Advisor. I also represent the Governor on the Board of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority. It is my pleasure to appear before you today in **support** of the nomination of Mr. Sam Aiona as a Director of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA).

Sam has served as an interim director of the Board and during that time has shown a deep and abiding understanding of the issues affecting those who live in public housing or are homeless. In his position as Director of the Office of Community Services (OCS), Mr. Aiona works with many of the same groups as those who are clients of the HPHA. The natural overlap between the functions and responsibilities of the OCS and HPHA means that Sam can provide the Board with additional insights as well as discuss with us the services and assistance being provided to public housing residents through the programs offered by the Office of Community Services.

In addition to helping link the work of OCS and HPHA, Mr. Aiona brings a common sense, can do attitude to his duties. He has attended our meetings regularly and has also attended evening meetings in various communities representing our Board. He frequently makes helpful suggestions that keep our meetings flowing smoothly and recognizes the challenges that public agencies face in delivering services to those in need.

His talents and community-minded spirit add depth to the HPHA, and I hope you will consider his nomination favorably.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 13, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senate Committee on Education and Housing

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **G. M. 281 - GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE SAM AIONA TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY**

Hearing: Friday, March 13, 2009; 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

G. M. 427 - GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE SAM AIONA TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Department of Human Services **supports** the nomination of Mr. Sam Aiona to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA).

Mr. Aiona is the Executive Director of the Office of Community Services and is familiar with many of the same individuals and families who are clients of the HPHA. He will bring in-depth knowledge and understanding of public housing and homeless issues to the HPHA.

Mr. Aiona has served as an interim director of the Board of the HPHA and has represented the Board in many community meetings. His commitment to finding ways to address housing and homeless issues will be valuable to the HPHA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Mr. Aiona's nomination to the Board of Directors of the HPHA.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII



MICAH A. KANE
CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

KAULANA H.R. PARK
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRMAN

ROBERT J. HALL
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS
P.O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KAULANA H.R. PARK
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING

IN CONSIDERATION OF G.M. 281
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE SAM AIONA

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2009, 2:00 P.M.
ROOM 225, STATE CAPITOL

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of the nomination of Sam Aiona as Director of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA).

Over the past year, I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Aiona as a member of the Board. Mr. Aiona brings a wealth of experience and professionalism as a former House Representative and his current leadership position in Labor and Industrial Relations. He has already made significant impact with key recommendations of HPHA policy and programs changes. And with his past knowledge of real estate, he will be instrumental in better understanding the pro's and con's of mixed income redevelopment projects. I encourage you to confirm his appointment for Governor's Message 281.

Support for the confirmation of Sam Aiona as a director of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Aloha: Sam Aiona has been a welcome addition to the Board of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA). Since his appointment, he has demonstrated a strong feeling for the cares and concerns of the residents of public housing. During discussions that take place in our Board meetings, Sam provides a voice of reason, as well as a voice of compassion. He is a highly respected member of the Board.

Sam listens attentively to the issues at hand, and then provides his insights into the direction the Housing Authority should be heading. As Chair of the Board, I have particularly appreciated his no nonsense approach to getting things done, and the sense of urgency he brings to improving the performance of the agency.

It is my hope that you will confirm Sam Aiona, and allow him to continue his contributions to improving the performance of HPHA, and the overall well being of its many residents.

Sincerely,

**Travis O. Thompson
Chair, HPHA**

March 11, 2009

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



CHAD K. TANIGUCHI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Statement of
Chad K. Taniguchi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING

March 13, 2009 2:00 p.m.
Room 225, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
G.M. 281

**Confirmation of Gubernatorial Nominee, Sam Aiona, to the Board of Directors of the
Hawaii Public Housing Authority**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of the confirmation of Sam Aiona to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA).

HPHA provides housing and services to low-income families and the disabled, in addition to the elderly. Mr. Aiona, as Executive Director of the Office of Community Services (OCS) within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, is familiar with the challenges and opportunities in serving this group of citizens. He brings to the HPHA Board a viewpoint that focuses on increasing the self-sufficiency of our residents through education and job training. In his capacity in OCS he also has experience with services for immigrants and refugees, another common factor in the two programs.

As Executive Director of HPHA I have had the privilege of working with Mr. Aiona on the HPHA Board over the past ten months and am familiar with his qualifications to serve on the Board of HPHA. One example of the benefits of his service on the HPHA Board is his experience with performance-based contracts, which pay service vendors for demonstrable performance results. Mr. Aiona's experience with these contracts adds insight to Board discussions on HPHA initiatives.

March 11, 2009

Senator Norman Sakamoto
Committee Members

This letter is in support of the appointment of Mr. Sam Aiona to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority Board of Directors.

As a member of the HPHA Board, I have had the privilege of serving with Sam as a fellow board member. Sam has brought invaluable experience, manao, credibility and direction to the work of the Board.

As you are well aware, this current Board of Directors inherited monumental problems and challenges from poor maintenance and oversight responsibilities for numerous years. I truly believe with the continued commitment and tenacity of the current board and members like Sam, much needed changes and directions will continue to be realized.

I humbly ask that you approve the appointment of Mr. Sam Aiona to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority Board of Directors. Thank you for your favorable response to this request.

Sincerely yours,

Carol R. Ignacio
Executive Director

TORKILDSON, KATZ, MOORE,
HETHERINGTON & HARRIS

ATTORNEYS AT LAW, A LAW CORPORATION
700 BISHOP STREET, 15TH FLOOR
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-4187
TELEPHONE (808) 523-6000 • FACSIMILE (808) 523-6001

STEVEN L.F. HO
E-MAIL: SLH@TORKILDSON.COM

March 11, 2009

Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
and Members of the Committee on Education and Housing
Hawaii State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Confirmation Hearing of Sam Aiona
Friday, March 13, 2009, 2:00 p.m., GM 281

Dear Senator Sakamoto and Members of the Committee on Education and Housing:

It is my honor and privilege to submit this unqualified endorsement of the appointment of Sam Aiona to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

I am a shareholder and director with the law firm of Torkildson, Katz, Moore, Hetherington & Harris. I have had the pleasure of knowing Sam, on both a personal and professional level, since 1998.

I first met Sam when we were both participants in the Pacific Century Fellows Program, a program designed to inspire the next generation of island leaders to seek creative solutions to the challenges facing Hawaii. Out of a group of 25 Fellows, all of whom were extremely successful in their respective fields, Sam quickly emerged as one of the leaders. His enthusiasm, energy level and commitment to addressing the issues facing our state inspired the other Fellows to think "outside of the box" and to become more actively engaged in tackling these issues.

Since then, our paths have crossed many times. Sam has been involved with numerous organizations providing support and services to the community, including in his current position as Executive Director of the Office of Community Services. As counsel to various nonprofit organizations, I have had the opportunity to observe Sam's leadership skills first hand. Sam has and continues to work tirelessly to improve our community - - Sam truly leads by example.

One of Sam's strongest characteristics is his interpersonal skills. Sam has the ability to interact comfortably with people from all walks of life, fields and professions. He has the intelligence and self-confidence to deal with people at the highest levels, while maintaining the

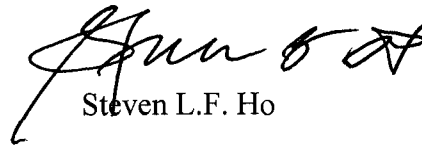
Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
March 11, 2009
Page 2

awareness and sensitivity needed to relate to those junior to him. Sam's interpersonal skills enable him to communicate his ideas effectively and gain their acceptance from others.

Sam has proven to have the leadership talent, professional abilities and interpersonal skills to be an effective member of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority, and I strongly support his appointment. If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

TORKILDSON, KATZ, MOORE,
HETHERINGTON & HARRIS
Attorneys At Law, A Law Corporation



Steven L.F. Ho

GBT

Senator Norman Sakamoto
Chair
Senate Committee on Education and Housing
State Capitol
Honolulu HI 96913

Dear Senator Sakamoto,

This letter is to ask for your recommendation in support of Sam Aiona to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA). I have known and respected Sam Aiona for over 10 years primarily through his volunteer and community service.

His commitment to our community is consistently reflected in his business as well as his family and non-profit works. When he accepts an appointment, position on a board or committee, or supports a project, he can be counted on to add value and sound leadership.

Thank you for your consideration and if I can add further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Gae Bergquist Trommald

Kay Ahina
2029 Nuuanu Ave., Apt. 1709
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

(808) 220-4929

Via Fax: 1-800-586-6659

Senate Sergeant-At-Arms Office

Re: Appointment of Sam Aiona to the Board of Directors of the
Hawaii Public Housing Authority; GM 281
Hearing Date: March 13, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225

The Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Committee on Education and Housing

Dear Senator Sakamoto:

I am writing in **support** of Sam Aiona's nomination to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

I have known Sam for many years and have found him to be honest, forthright and fair minded. He has always demonstrated a high degree of commitment to public service. I have always been impressed with his ability to get along with others – even under difficult circumstances.

I respectfully request that you look favorably upon his appointment to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

Please feel free to contact me at 220-4929 if you have any questions.

Aloha,


Kay Ahina

Leolinda L. K. Parlin

2604 Pauoa Road
Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone: (808)282-6348 leolinda@resqconsultants.com Fax: (808)531-3595

Date: March 13, 2009

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & HOUSING
Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Fr: Leolinda Parlin, Private Citizen

Re: GM281 – **SUPPORT**: Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA),
Gubernatorial Nominee, SAM AIONA

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support on GM281, the confirmation of Sam Aiona to the Board of Directors of the HPHA.

To say I have known Sam Aiona my entire life is an understatement. We grew up together in Hilo, starting off in Kindergarten. We have managed to stay connected all of these years. Sam is a critical member of our extended family and my natural support network.

I have entrusted Sam to be the Executor of my Estate and Trust in the event anything should happen to me. As large as my 'Ohana is, he is the only person that I know that had the knowledge, heart, commitment and the best interest of my children in mind. It is my expectation that the same requirements would hold forth in the selection of candidates for the Board of Directors for HPHA. The ideal director would have the knowledge of the community, government and the industry, as well as the heart for the people of whom the Board will serve; not to mention the commitment. Sam is extremely loyal and has the stick-to-it-ness to get the job done. There is no question that he has the best interest of the residents in public housing in the forefront of his mind. His tenure at the Office of Community Service is quite remarkable as he's been able to implement a cultural change in government to be more responsive, accountable, and transparent. He is a big picture thinker and makes the connections and linkages to strengthen our system. It is not just about bricks and mortar; it is about real people, with real needs needing shelter and an opportunity to develop their own resiliency and to become included in our society.

I humbly ask this committee to entrust Sam as I have with our future.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Karl P. Espaldon
520 Lunalilo Home Road, #6311
Honolulu, HI 96825
(808) 542-8222

March 13, 2009

Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Committee on Education and Housing
Hawaii State Senate
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Sakamoto:

I am writing in strong support of Mr. Sam Aiona, whose confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) is before the Committee on Education and Housing today. From 2003 to 2005, I worked with Mr. Aiona at the State Office of Community Services (OCS), where he currently serves as Executive Director. Since leaving OCS, I have maintained close personal and professional ties with Mr. Aiona.

From my personal experience working with and for Mr. Aiona, I believe that he has the requisite qualities and skills that would contribute greatly to the work of the HPHA Board. First, through his experience at OCS, Mr. Aiona has a keen and deep understanding of HPHA's target populations and the particular needs they face, not only in housing, but in many of the varying aspects of their lives. Second, Mr. Aiona is a problem solver. He relishes tackling difficult and challenging problems and issues, and he has the courage to make difficult decisions when required. Third, Mr. Aiona is creative and resourceful in his approach to problem-solving. He is a quintessential "out-of-the-box" thinker but with the follow through skills to make things happen; for example, under his leadership at OCS, the agency developed and implemented an innovative and bold performance based performance system for its purchase of service programs, which is recognized as a model both within the state and outside the state as well. Finally, Mr. Aiona has the personal compassion for others and a passion for and history of service to the public. He is the kind of individual we need on the Board to tackle one of the toughest issues facing the state today.

I respectfully ask the Committee to confirm Mr. Aiona to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority.

Sincerely,

(Sent electronically)
KARL P. ESPALDON

TESTIMONY OF
SAM AIONA
Gubernatorial Nominee
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING
Friday, March 13, 2009, 2:00 p.m.
Room 225, State Capitol

Good afternoon Chair Sakamoto and members of the committee. My name is Sam Aiona and I am here today to ask for your support as I seek confirmation to the Board of Directors for the Hawaii Public Housing Authority. I have served as an interim member of the Board for the last nine months and would like to continue my service for the term which expires in 2011.

I am currently the Executive Director of the State of Hawaii Office of Community Services (OCS) and have served in this capacity since 2003. OCS serves the low income, immigrant and refugee populations in our community and we work with many non profit organizations throughout the state.

Since joining the Board of Directors I have learned a lot about the public housing system. But more importantly I learned about the residents of public housing, their concerns and their suggestions. I've also learned that those of us in government and those of us that sit on such boards have a fiduciary responsibility to the organization but we also have a responsibility to the people we serve to make sure they have the resources to succeed in life.

I was given a set of questions to answer and am happy to share with you my thoughts:

- a. Why do you wish to be a member of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority?

I would like to continue to be a member of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority Board of Directors because I feel I have the necessary experience and skills to make decisions that will result in a better quality of life for the residents.

- b. What do you perceive are the role and responsibilities of a member of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority?

First and foremost the role and responsibility of a board member is to make sure that the Authority is running smoothly. This means the staff has the resources, motivation and direction necessary to do a good job. This will require adequate funding, ample infrastructure, sound policy and the passion to help others. If the organization is run properly and things are in order, the residents can only benefit.

- c. Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member of this Council.

Although infrastructure is a function of funding, and funding is the province of the Legislature, I believe I am qualified with regards to providing sound policy and the passion and commitment necessary. As I indicate below, I believe one my best qualities align perfectly with providing sound policy. Interacting in many capacities with the State, non-profits and the community over the years has given me the ability and experience to make balanced, fair, and responsible decisions.

Every decision I make as a board member comes with the interest of the residents and of the State in mind. As the Executive Director of the Office of Community Services I work with many non profits who directly serve low income residents of our community. Working with these non profits, speaking to clients, and engaging directly with the community I believe I have developed a good grasp of the needs and expectations of this community. Working in state government, I have the knowledge necessary to make decisions for the Authority in relation to the "State system". A balance can be achieved and my decisions are based on balancing the capacity and obligations of State government with the needs of the residents.

- d. Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the Hawaii Public Housing Authority?

Three qualities I like to think I bring to the board are passion to help people, knowledge of state government, and willingness to serve.

- e. Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the Hawaii Public Housing Authority? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?

Not currently. However, if one should arise I would bring it to the Board's attention, state my position on the matter and then possibly recuse myself if a material conflict existed.

- f. What are three ways that the Hawaii Public Housing Authority should/must help meet the housing needs in Hawaii?

Three ways to meet the housing needs are creating properties with mixed used development, increase funding for capital improvements by streamlining process, and providing inventory proportional to the public's need.

- g. What goals should the Hawaii Public Housing Authority set and how would you propose to measure them?

Our goals should be to make sure all public housing units are safe, secure and comfortable. Measuring safety means reducing the number of incidents on our properties caused by unsafe facilities. We can also measure safety by our maintenance routines and how recent our safety certifications were performed. The most important measure of security and comfort is the resident's perception of how comfortable and secure the facilities are. By removing housing as a barrier and challenge to the resident's success, we hope to alleviate this stressor and allow them to focus on other challenges. With help from service providers and other State agencies, we hope to introduce programs that will curb domestic violence, drug and alcohol use, and promote community, thereby all contributing to the stability, security, and comfort of the residents.

Comments on bills submitted to the 2009 Hawaii State Legislature
Sam Aiona - March 13, 2009

SB1160 SD1-Asses units in public housing for common area expenses

Residents of public housing are obviously low income and assessing fees will not help their economic condition. However, all of us must take responsibility for our actions and if their action comes with financial implications they must bear the burden of correcting the action through compensation.

SB734- Special Master to resolve Health/Safety violations

Although this bill has not survived, the Board of HPHA welcomes outside support and advice. We are not all experts in every aspect of housing challenges and regularly come across situations that require we solicit commentary. I appreciate the thought behind the bill, and I believe that this situation can be adroitly resolved through presentations to the Board by qualified experts in each field. I would appreciate the Legislature's help in facilitating these presentations.

SB753-Security at Public Housing Facilities

This bill has also not survived the First Decking Deadline, but that does not diminish the importance or immediacy of security issues at these facilities. I believe security for the residents is one of the most important issues at Public Housing facilities. However hiring armed guards may not be the only solution. Community building, coupled with a drug and alcohol-free environment as well as partnership with social service agencies I feel can provide the residents the mutual respect they need to get along in tight living quarters.

SB663-Familial Status Definition

I support the efforts to standardize documentation related to legal guardianship of a child. I also understand this bill is not meant to undermine the practices established as custom here in Hawai'i. However, the literacy of the people involved must be established. Having your name on a piece of paper does not always establish intent of the parents, it merely legally protects those that seek to break up that relationship. The burden of proof should be on the State if the child is not being abused or otherwise mistreated.

SB 1221-Criminal Trespass on Public Housing

I support this bill, it adds teeth to officials designated by the HPHA to protect the safety and welfare of the residents. I would suggest you may also want to add conflict resolution training for these designated officials so they can recognize signs of escalation.

SB535-Prohibition on Alcohol Consumption

This bill seems like a housekeeping measure that closes the loophole for those carrying alcohol but not actively drinking it. It is measures like these that will, as a whole, provide the security and well-being of the residents.

SB439-HPHA/Private partnerships

I support the intent of this bill insofar as the State cannot afford to continually provide all the resources necessary to accomplish the Public good. Public/Private partnerships are an excellent tool to encourage the private sector and others willing to volunteer to help agencies like HPHA achieve their goals.

SB445-HPHA procurement exemptions

This measure, like SB439, provides a mechanism to expedite the repair and maintenance of several key HPHA properties in order to meet certain standards. Although it is a good idea for an agency that was caught off guard, perhaps from an act of god or other unforeseen event, the HPHA needs to tighten up its administrative processes. Otherwise, we would just be loosening oversight on an agency that is not performing as the Board feels it should be with their current resources.

SB910- Homeless Branch move to BESSD

The Homeless Programs within HPHA are much different than public housing because the homeless programs are just that – programs. The public housing side should develop more programs like the homeless section. Because the homeless programs are about self sufficiency they should be moved to BESSD so they can take advantage of the resources available within BESSD and continue to focus on programs to help residents.

SB1294-Fund Appropriation for Compliance Projects

This bill has not survived. This measure is a straight appropriation bill, as such I will leave the decision up to the wisdom of the Legislature. I do support additional funding to bring the facilities up to code, however these are tough times and there are many worthy agencies that could use additional funding.

SB455-Smoking at Public Housing Projects

I support the intent of this measure. As State funded projects, Public Housing units should be subject to the same regulations as all State facilities. However, we must remember these are people's homes, and as such we should allow them certain freedoms they would enjoy in market housing. Like many other issues in Public Housing, we must strive to strike a balance between the freedom afforded a homeowner, and the inconveniences a person causes their neighbor in tight living quarters.

SB757-Shelter in Place Pilot Program

I am in favor of measures like this, though this one has not survived. As officials of the State we must be fair and even-handed. In such a program as this, there will likely be a population that we cannot serve due to fiscal constraints. Therefore, we must develop strict criteria as to being “in danger of homelessness.” Ultimately, we may raise the ire of the public who ends up just above our criteria line that does not qualify.