

GM 304



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

April 2, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: G.M. 304 - GUBERNATORIAL NOMINATION OF LINDA ANN
WATSON TO THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Hearing: Thursday, April 2, 2009 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

The Department of Human Services strongly supports the nomination of Ms. Linda Ann Watson to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

The SRC was established in the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The SRC acts in partnership with the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division on services that address employment needs of individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Linda Ann Watson is seeking an appointment for her first term on the Council. Ms. Watson brings personal experience as a person with sensory disabilities. She is currently is a member of the Statewide Independent Living Council and was selected to act as their liaison to the State Rehabilitation Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to this Committee.

March 31, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The undersigned which constitute the Executive Committee of the Statewide Independent Living Council wish to testify in Non-Support of Linda Ann Watson's Reappointment to the Statewide Rehabilitation Council.

Ms. Watson, although highly educated, comes to meetings and is frequently disruptive, often attempting to derail fellow board members from proceeding with board business. Rather than having a forward vision, she frequently makes motions that do not allow the board to complete board business. At the National SILC Congress, the Chair and the Executive Committee received numerous complaints from participants regarding Ms. Watson's behavior and how she did not represent the Statewide Independent Living Council well.

At this time, we feel that Ms. Watson would not represent SILC well on your council. We thank you for your consideration of this matter. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Nathan Say, SILC Board Chair

Roxanna Bolden, SILC Vice-Chair

Lillian Gonzales-Brown, SILC Secretary

Laura Tabosa, SILC Executive Committee Member at Large

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

Thursday, April 2, 2009, 2:00 PM, Conference Room 016

Strongly opposing GM304, Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Linda Ann Watson.

My name is Mark F. Romoser. I work in the field of independent living, and in that capacity have attended several meetings of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Linda Ann Watson is currently a member of the SILC.

On numerous occasions, Ms. Watson has disrupted SILC meetings with her boorish, obnoxious behavior toward both other SILC members and members of the public, myself included. Furthermore, she has been carrying on a personal vendetta against the SILC Executive Director, Sheryl Nelson, since Ms. Nelson was hired in early 2007. Immediately after being named SILC chair, Ms. Watson made a motion that she be given the keys to the SILC office, of which Ms. Nelson is the sole employee. No one seconded the motion. Nonetheless, Ms. Watson proceeded to "debate" the motion, by herself, for several minutes. In December 2008, allegations surfaced that she had made threats against Ms. Nelson. She was subsequently removed as SILC chair.

In my opinion, Ms. Watson's appalling behavior has been a primary cause of the turmoil that has consumed the SILC for at least the past two years. It would be inappropriate and counterproductive to name someone such as Ms. Watson with this kind of history on another state board to the State Rehabilitation Council.

I strongly urge the committee not to approve GM304. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely yours,

signature on file

Mark F. Romoser

Honolulu, HI