

**GM 451**



## **HAWAII DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER**

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### **THE SENATE THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2010**

#### **COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

**Testimony in Support of GM 451  
April 8, 2010, 2:15 P.M.  
Conference Room 016**

Chair Chun Oakland and Committee Members:

The Hawaii Disability Rights Center is pleased to offer testimony in strong support of GM 451, which recommends for consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), Gubernatorial nominee, Mr. Howard Alan Lesser, one of our agency's most distinguished advocates, for a term to expire 6-30-2010.

Mr. Lesser is seeking his second term on the SRC and is the representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP), established and funded under the Federal Rehabilitation Act in each state to help people with disabilities when they are having difficulty getting services funded under the Rehabilitation Act.

Mr. Lesser's experience in serving people with disabilities has spanned his career since moving to Hawaii in 1979, having been involved in a supported employment program for adults with autism; as a program specialist with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities; Director of Rehabilitation at Goodwill Industries of Honolulu; Deputy Director of the Hawaii Center for Independent Living and, in his current position as an advocate with the Hawaii Disability Rights Center. Mr. Lesser was also appointed for two consecutive terms on the State Mental Health Council, for which he served for both terms as Chair; has served on the Advocacy Committee of the Hawaii Diabetes Association, served as Trustee of the Hawaii Lions Foundation and is a member and Past President of the Palolo Lions Club. He currently serves as Chair of the SRC's Program and Evaluation Committee.

With his extensive experience serving people with disabilities, we believe that Mr. Lesser will continue to be an active participant on the SRC and will serve his next term with a high degree of professionalism.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Mr. Howard Alan Lesser for consideration and confirmation to the SRC.

**ChunOakland3 - Serena**

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**From:** kuulei [kuuleikiliona@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 07, 2010 4:39 PM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Subject:** GM 451 - Howard Lesser

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO GM 451 - HOWARD LESSER

To: The Senate Committee on Human Services  
Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair

From: Ku'u lei A. Kiliona, private citizen; advocate for persons with disabilities.  
[kuuleikiliona@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:kuuleikiliona@hawaii.rr.com)

Date: April 8, 2010  
Time: 2:15 p.m.

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Committee Members,

This testimony is in opposition to the nomination of GM 451, Mr. Howard A. Lesser. Nomination, whether new or continued, for service on any board is a privilege and not an automatic right. Fitness in character is taken into account when a nominee is up for consideration. I am opposed to Mr. Lesser's nomination because of his questionable actions.

After I gave testimony on behalf of myself and other people with disabilities on a measure that was before the legislature, Mr. Lesser personally conducted a smear campaign against me. He did this without ever having met me or discussed differences with me. On numerous occasions over the last few years, Mr. Lesser has made false statements about me to my colleagues and others that were untrue regarding my character and actions. Colleagues have informed me that he worked to discredit my service of advocacy as well as my good character.

There are three others that I know of who have been harmed by Mr. Lesser in the same manner under similar or different circumstances, but they are not submitting testimony in order to "protect" themselves.

I request that this nomination not go forward in order to give Mr. Lesser time to make things right with those he has harmed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to present my testimony on this nominee.

*~Ku'ulei A. Kiona*