

GM616

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Gubernatorial Nominee, TIFFANY VARA, for a term to expire 6-30-2015.

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
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April 5, 2011

representative on the DD Division's DD Waiver Stakeholder Workgroup that provided input into the DD Waiver renewal application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Ms. Vara has been an active and valuable member on the Health and Early Childhood Committee that addresses accessible medical and dental care services for individuals with DD, and available family-centered, community-based, culturally appropriate services and supports for children with special needs. She has brought to the attention of the Committee alternative methods of providing care (including nursing care) to be able to meet the needs of children who are medically fragile and their families in the community, such as medical home models of care and the Hope program for community-based care.

Ms. Vara has also contributed to the Committee's work toward improving health outcomes for individuals with DD and assisted with coordinating meetings and fostering discussion with hospital staff on increasing awareness of the gynecological health needs of women with disabilities and on finding a way to provide education and training for physicians providing gynecological care for women with disabilities.

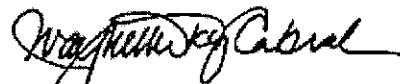
The Council would greatly benefit from Ms. Vara's experience and perspective in achieving educational and health outcomes for her daughter, and in carrying out activities that promote full inclusion in the community and accessible health care for individuals with DD.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to express our strong support for **GM 616** to confirm Tiffany Vara to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Sincerely,



Liz Ann Salvador
Chair



Waynette K.Y. Cabral, MSW
Executive Administrator



University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Center on Disability Studies
Hawai'i University Center for Excellence in Disabilities
1776 University Avenue UA 4-6, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822
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April 1, 2011

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
and Committee Members
Senate Human Services Committee
Hawai'i State Legislature
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Senator Chun, and Committee Members:

**Re: Governor's Appointment of Ms. Tiffany R. Vara
to State Council on Developmental Disabilities (GM #616)**

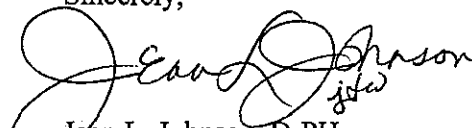
I am honored to support the appointment of Ms. Tiffany Vara to the Council. I have known Ms. Vara for more than five years through her volunteer activities as a member of the Health and Early Education Committee of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Ms. Vara is a tireless volunteer; her many contributions are immeasurable.

As a result of her work on that committee, she became very concerned about health issues facing young women with developmental disabilities. She has worked with me to find resources in the community to provide prevention screening services for these young women to improve their outcomes from various forms of cancer.

I have also worked closely with Ms. Vara as part of the national Pediatric Acquired Brain Injury program. Although she is the parent of a child with specific disabilities, Ms. Vara has the capacity to represent parents of children with diverse disabilities because of her insights and understanding of the systemic issues that affect all families who have a child or adult with disabilities.

Tiffany Vara is a sensitive, creative, and reliable member of our community. I wholeheartedly support her appointment to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I am certain she will be an effective, hard-working, contributing member of the Council.

Sincerely,



Jean L. Johnson, DrPH
Associate Director



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

CANCER CENTER

Randal K. Wada, MD
Associate Professor
Cancer Biology Program
UH Cancer Center
1236 Lauhala Street, 301C
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 30, 2011

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
Twenty-Sixth Legislature
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Members of the Human Services Committee:

I am a pediatric oncologist working at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children, with a joint appointment at the Cancer Center, where I supervise a research laboratory. I would like to submit testimony in support of Governor's Message 616 to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I have known Tiffany Vara for almost two years, having met her in my capacity as Medical Director of the Hawaii Cord Blood Bank, and Director of the Hematopoietic Progenitor Cell Transplant Program at Kapiolani. I have found her to be both a passionate advocate for children with disabilities, and a highly knowledgeable member of the general public with regard to medical issues concerning this patient population. Ms. Vara is also very personable and capable of working well as a team member.

I ask for your Committee's favorable consideration to confirm Ms. Vara for this position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randal Wada".

Randal Wada, MD

Susan LaFontaine, PT, MPH
Director, Rehabilitation Services
Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children
1319 Punahou Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826
March 31, 2011

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
Twenty-Sixth Legislature
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Susan LaFontaine, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children. I am writing to express full support for the Governor's Message 616 to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I have known **Mrs. Tiffany Vara** first as a parent of child who has received rehabilitation services at Kapi'olani since 2004 and secondly as a passionate advocate for individuals with special needs. It has been a privilege to work with Mrs. Vara as a parent and community partner. She is a powerful combination of keen intellect and compassion and is relentlessly committed to improving the quality of life of individuals with disabilities and their families. She is a community leader and has the ability and drive to bring positive change in this area.

I ask for your favorable consideration of Tiffany Vara to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Sincerely,

Susan LaFontaine



REHABILITATION HOSPITAL
OF THE PACIFIC

Rebuilding Lives Together

March 30, 2011

Gary A. Okamoto, MD
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
226 North Kuakini Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Date of Hearing: April 5, 2011

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
Twenty Sixth Legislature
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and
Members of the Human Services Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of Governor's Message **GM 616** to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I have known Tiffany Vara in-person for a year but knew about her, following the tragic brain injury of her beautiful child many years ago. Recently, Ms. Vara introduced me to an innovative, community-based, scientifically founded, internationally recognized treatment to enhance development of young children with neurologic impairments. She has actively championed the education of rehabilitation professionals about this innovative treatment approach at a State-wide level.

I believe that Ms. Vara would serve effectively on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities for several reasons. She has on-going experience caring for her daughter, her demonstrable passion for educating families and professionals on innovative practices, her remarkable ability to communicate with health care providers and families, and her organizing skills to 'get the job done' through teamwork.

I urge the Committee to favorably confirm the nomination of Tiffany Vara.

Sincerely

Gary A. Okamoto, MD
Chief Medical Officer

Cronin, Fried, Sekiya, Kekina & Fairbanks

Attorneys at Law, A Law Corporation

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Howard G. McPherson
Laura E. Ozak
Brian T. Toma
Gregory Y. P. Tom

April 5, 2011

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
Twenty-Sixth Legislature
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: GM 616-Tiffany Vara. Written Testimony of Laura Ozak, R.N.,
J.D., in support of Ms. Vara's appointment to the State Council
on Developmental Disabilities

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Members of the Human Services
Committee:

I am writing in support of Tiffany Vara's appointment to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Governor's Message 616. I am a registered nurse and attorney with Cronin, Fried, Sekiya, Kekina & Fairbanks. I am also a CASA certified Volunteer Guardian ad Litem with Family Court and a Public Member on the Board of Psychology. I have known Tiffany Vara for many years, and she is a tireless and effective advocate for individuals with disabilities. As the mother of a little girl with developmental challenges, Ms. Vara has much empathy for the challenges faced by the disabled and their families. She is bright, articulate, inquisitive and very knowledgeable relative to services for the disabled. She is a wonderful support to our clients who have brain injured children, and she is always willing to share ideas to help all disabled individuals meet their full potential. Her honest character and warm personality make all who come in contact with her feel supported and welcome. She is a great asset to our community, and would be a great asset to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

I respectfully ask for your Committee's favorable consideration in confirmation of Tiffany Vara to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Sincerely,



Laura Ozak, R.N., J.D.



SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair

Conference Room 016
April 5, 2011 at 1:15 p.m.

Testimony in support of GM 616, which nominates Tiffany Vara to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

My name is George W. Greene, President and CEO of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), whose membership includes all of the acute care hospitals in Hawaii, two-thirds of the long term care beds, home care agencies and hospices, and other related provider organizations. Our provider members employ more than 40,000 people statewide, delivering quality care to the people of Hawaii. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the nomination of Tiffany Vara to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (Council).

The Council is established by statute to develop a State plan to "guide the development and delivery of all individuals with developmental disabilities." The Council is also responsible for coordinating relevant State agencies and private agencies, monitoring and evaluating projects, advocating on behalf of those with developmental disabilities, reaching out to those with developmental disabilities and their families to access services, and reporting to the Governor and Legislature about the implementation of the State plan.

The majority of the members of the Council are persons with disabilities or family members of persons with disabilities. Also represented on the Council are service providers, the community, and State service agencies.

Tiffany Vara possesses a deep interest in developmental disabilities that is evidenced by her participation in organizations that are committed to advancing programs for people with developmental disabilities. She has been a member of the Developmental Disabilities Health and Early Childhood Subcommittee since 2007. She has been a member of the National Family Advisory Board, National Pediatric Acquired Brain Injury Plan/The Brain Project since 2009. She was a Family Representative to the Outcome Planning Committee, Developmental Disabilities/Mentally Retarded Program from 2006 to 2007.

In 2004, Tiffany's then two year old daughter, Abby, suffered a tragic near-death drowning accident. Since then, Tiffany launched a website chronicling Abby's struggles and allowing those who care for the Vara family to offer prayers on their behalf. Tiffany's willingness to detail Abby's "journey back", has brought peace and comfort to those similarly suffering.

Tiffany Vara has the experience, expertise, and empathy that will make her a valuable addition to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I am confident that her participation in the Council will move Hawaii forward in providing appropriate services to those with developmental disabilities.

For the foregoing reasons, the Healthcare Association supports GM 616.

ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

From: Calvin Sia [calsia@pol.net]
Sent: Monday, April 04, 2011 8:27 AM
To: HMS Testimony
Subject: Testimony in Support of Tiffany Vara GM 616 for Reappointment to State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Please accept my Testimony in Support of Tiffany Vara GM 616 for Reappointment to State Council on Developmental Disabilities Hearing on Tuesday, April 5.

Calvin Sia, MD FAAP,
656 Paikau Street,
Honolulu, HI 96816
April 4, 2011

Re: Hearing Tuesady, April 5, 2011 for Reappointment to State Council on Developmental Disabilities - Tiffany Vara - GM 616

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair,
Senate Human Services Committee,
Twenty Sixth Legislature,
State Capitol,
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Members of the Human Services Committee,

I would strongly recommend the Re-appointment of Tiffany Vara - GM 616 - to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I have known her over many years socially and recognize her devotion to families and children through her personal life and community activities. She has a positive attitude on developmental disabilities through a personal traumatic injury to her child a few years ago from not only an individual but a "team care coordination" approach.

She has recently completed her first term of service and her continued appointment would be most valuable to our families and children with developmental disabilities in Hawaii.

Please support the confirmation of Tiffany Vara - GM 616.

Aloha,

Calvin Sia, MD FAAP

ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

From: Bunge, Patty [Patty.Bunge@kapiolani.org]
Sent: Friday, April 01, 2011 3:05 PM
To: HMS Testimony
Subject: Recommendation of Tiffany Vara GM616

Patty Bunge, OTR

Rehab Dept

Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children

1319 Punahou St

Honolulu HI 96826

4/1/11

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair

Senate Human Services Committee

Twenty-Sixth Legislature

State Capitol

Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Patty Bunge, occupational therapist. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Governor's Message GM 616 to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I have known Tiffany Vara for nearly five years as the mother of a client I treated. She is a very proactive mom of a child with significant disabilities; proactive in advocating for her child's needs, educating her self, and advocating on behalf of other children with disabilities. She always takes in to account how her influence can go beyond her own family. For these reasons I believe she would be an asset to the Council and to the people of Hawai'i.

I ask for your Committee's favorable consideration to confirm Tiffany Vara.

Sincerely,

Patty Bunge, OTR

Shari Goo-Yoshino
99-514 Kaholi Place
Aiea, Hawaii, 96701

Date of Hearing: 05 April 2011

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
Twenty-Sixth Legislature
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Shari Goo-Yoshino. I am a speech-language pathologist and a parent of a child with multiple challenges. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Governor's Message GM 616 Tiffany Vara to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

I have come to know Tiffany through various venues. As an invited keynote speaker, she captured the attention of speech-language pathologists and related professionals to advocate for individuals with special needs through her experiences. As a parent, she is a leader, doer, and a giver in our community in sharing resources to improve the quality of lives of children with disabilities. Through many interactions with Tiffany, I know she listens compassionately, respects differences, understands that all individuals with disabilities and their families are uniquely special, makes decisions based on research and evidence, sets new paths with courage, and works genuinely to improve lives of others. I am certain Tiffany Vara will represent and serve all citizens with disabilities honorably, fairly, and effectively.

I ask for your Committee's favorable consideration to confirm Tiffany Vara.

Sincerely,
Shari Goo-Yoshino
Speech-language pathologist and parent

April 1, 2011

Honorable Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee
State Capitol, Room 226
415 S Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Members of the Human Services Committee:

I am writing in strong support of Tiffany Vara's reappointment to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I have known Tiffany almost 10 years and have found her to be a passionate and effective advocate for the needs of those with developmental disabilities. Tiffany not only has personal experience with her own disabled child, but spends extensive time researching effective programs and treatments so that she can be an informed advocate.

I strongly recommend her reappointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia Pressler". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Virginia Pressler, MD

ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

From: Hokulani Defeo [tuastreasures@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2011 7:29 PM
To: HMS Testimony
Subject: Testimony for hearing date 4/5/2011 GM 616

Rachel Hokulani DeFeo
1445 Kawelu Street
Pearl City, Hawai'i 96782
Hearing date: April 5, 2011

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
Twenty-Sixth Legislature
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Rachel Hokulani DeFeo and I am the mother of a medically fragile little boy named Dominick. . Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Governor's Message Tiffany Vara GM 616 to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I have known Tiffany Vara for about a year and have found her to be an extremely knowledgeable person when it comes to children with disabilities. My son is almost two and suffered a brain injury at the age of two months, it has been a very trying time but meeting and speaking with Tiffany made me realize that there is so much more to my child than I was told by professionals. She has been working non stop to open up professionals to alternative therapies that have the potential of changing many lives. I believe she is an asset to our State Council on Developmental Disabilities

I respectfully ask for your Committee's favorable consideration to confirm Tiffany Vara.

Mahalo ia `oukou,
Rachel Hokulani DeFeo
Mother to Dominick Tua Haleali`i Tuagalu