

**Testimony of John M. Tonaki, State Public Defender
to the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor**

January 30, 2012

GM 558: Nomination of David Kuwahara to the Defender Council

Chair Hee and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support the Governor's nomination of David Kuwahara to the Defender Council. The Defender Council is the governing body of the Office of the Public Defender pursuant to H.R.S. § 802-9. That section provides that there shall be at least one member of the council representing each county in the state. Mr. Kuwahara would represent the County of Hawaii.

Mr. Kuwahara began his legal career with the Office of the Public Defender before he left to begin a private practice of law. He has a tremendous wealth of legal knowledge having tried cases of all types in both the Oahu and Big Island courts. He currently serves as a per diem district/family court judge in the Third Circuit Court. His background in the criminal justice system, particularly in the Big Island system, will be of great assistance to the Defender Council. I urge this honorable committee to recommend confirmation of this nomination.

Thank for the opportunity to comment on this measure.