

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

January 30, 2012

GM 559: Nomination of Philip Lowenthal to the Defender Council

Chair Hee and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support the Governor's nomination of Philip Lowenthal 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. Lowenthal would represent the County of Maui.

Mr. Lowenthal is a well-respected Hawaii trial attorney who has specialized for decades in the area of criminal defense. He has tried cases of the most serious and complex nature in both the federal courts and Hawaii state courts. He has also taught evidence at the Maui Community College for many years, served as an instructor at the Hawaii Public Defender Seminar, and served on numerous committees and task forces dealing with the Hawaii court rules and the justice system. The Defender Council would be very fortunate to have an attorney and citizen of Mr. Lowenthal's stature and expertise serve as a council member. I urge this honorable committee to recommend confirmation of this nomination.

Thank for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Monday, January 30, 2012; 10:30 a.m.;

Room 016

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT: GM 559 Phillip Lowenthal

Senator Clayton Hee, Chair; Senator Mailie S.L. Shimabukuro Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor:

My name is James E. Coon and I speak in support of the Governor's nomination of Mr. Phillip Lowenthal. I have known Mr. Lowenthal for over thirty years and know him to be a man of integrity, fine character and keen insight. It is my reasoned opinion that he will serve well in this position on the Defender Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. If you have any questions, please contact me at 808-870-9115.

Sincerely,

James E. Coon