

GM598

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

March 20, 2012

GM 598: Nomination of Michael Soong to the Defender Council

Chair Hee and Committee Members:

It is a pleasure to support the nomination of Michael Soong to be the Kauai representative on the Defender Council. As a member of the Defender Council, Mr. Soong will assist the Office of the Public Defender in fulfilling our mission of zealous and effective representation of indigent persons charged with criminal offenses.

Mr. Soong is currently a private criminal defense lawyer practicing in Lihue. He obtained his law degree from the Southwestern School of Law and was formerly the elected prosecuting attorney for the county of Kauai. Mr. Soong also formerly served as a Deputy Public Defender and he has a complete understanding of the criminal justice system and the Public Defender's essential role in that system. We would be privileged to have him serve on the Defender Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on this matter.