

# **GM 573**

**Report Title:**

Advisory Board on Veterans' Services

**Measure Title:**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the  
Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, Gubernatorial  
Nominee, CHELSEA FERNANDEZ, for a term to expire 6-  
30-2016

Chelsea Ann K. E. Fernandez  
16 Alehela Pl,  
Kahului, Hi 96732

February 25, 2013

To the Honorable Senator Will Espero:

Re: Nomination to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services

My written statement addressing your questions follows.

1. I would like to be a member of the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services because I feel that our generation of veterans need a voice to represent them. Also as a women veteran, I feel that more representation for us is needed. Also with the new changes to womens duties in the military, there will be different issues that will need to be addressed. I would like to be able to help my fellow veterans get the help and answers to their concerns.
2. I feel that I am qualified because I am a combat veteran myself and I also have been a veteran spouse, so I am aware of some of the issues that veterans may face. I feel that with my background, veterans will be more comfortable in talking with me and sharing in their concerns. I will be able to make a better connection with them knowing I am not only working for them, but with them.
3. During my term on this board, I hope to make more connections with young veterans and female veterans and to be able to convey to them there importance to the community. I would like to emphasis to them that they are cared about and that we are here to help them make a good transition into the civilian life and help them to understand the honor that is within them that our community loves and respects.
4. I do not foresee a conflict of interest during my future on this Advisory Board on Veteran Services', but if at anytime one should arise I will do my best to overcome that. If a conflict of interest should occur, I feel that I have enough professionalism to bypass the situation. When it comes to issues concerning veterans, I am here to help them and resolve their issues.

Thank you Senator Espero for your time and consideration. I look forward to being able to serve our veterans in this capacity.

Sincerely,

*Chelsea Fernandez*

Chelsea Fernandez

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY

GM 573 Submitting for consideration and confirmation  
To the Advisory Board on Veterans Services,  
Gubernatorial Nominee,  
CHELSEA ANN FERNANDEZ for a term to expire  
6-30-2016

PRESENTATION TO THE

SENATE COMMITTEE PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN  
DIRECTOR OF THE STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

February 26, 2013

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker and Committee members:

I'm Ron Han, Director for the State Office of Veteran's Services (OVS). The OVS supports GM 573 confirmation of Chelsea Ann Fernandez to be appointed to the Advisory Board on Veterans Services for a term to expire June 30, 2016.

Chelsea Ann is a Hawaii Army National Guard Veteran who deployed with her unit to support combat activity in the Southwest Asia. Her service to her Nation and to her State has been exemplary. She has received unit commendation awards and received an honorable discharge from service.

In 2012, the Women's Legislative Caucus bestowed on her the honor of a Woman of Distinction for her leadership in the community as a young entrepreneur helping physical challenged citizens with opportunities for rehabilitation and employment.

As a working mother, she has offered her services to help stand down events on Maui and here on Oahu assisting Women Veterans and their families. Her selection to the Hawaii Women's Military Veterans Task Force as an original cadre member proved her ability to go above and beyond to support Veterans and their families. She created a Hawaii Women's Military Veterans Task Force

web page so interested Veterans can find out about more about programs and services offered to the 14,000 Women Veterans here in Hawaii.

Additionally, she and her fellow task force members published a Legislative Report to highlight the needs of our Women Veterans and the way ahead. Chelsea Ann represents the very best of this generation's Veterans and is deserved of this appointment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Chelsea Ann Fernandez's confirmation and consideration.

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY

GM 573 Submitting for consideration and confirmation

To the Advisory Board on Veterans Services,  
Gubernatorial Nominee,  
CHELSEA ANN FERNANDEZ for a term to expire  
6-30-2016

PRESENTATION TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

KATHLEEN A. EISENBREY, MPH  
CHAIR, HAWAII WOMEN'S MILITARY VETERANS TASK FORCE

February 26, 2013

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker and Committee members:

I am Kathleen Ann Eisenbrey, Chair of the Hawaii Women's Military Veterans Task Force. Please accept this testimony in support of GM 573, which confirms Chelsea Ann Fernandez's appointment to the Advisory Board on Veterans Services for a term to expire June 30, 2016.

Ms. Fernandez is a key member of the Hawaii Women's Military Veterans Task Force, which was appointed by the Hawaii Senate Concurrent Resolution 5/Senate Resolution 6 in January 2012. Her nomination was strongly supported by the Office of Veterans Services as Ms. Fernandez has a strong track record of consistently demonstrating leadership in support of the Veterans Ohana.

Since the task force's inception in March 2012, Ms. Fernandez has demonstrated her strong leadership ability as she was unanimously voted by the Hawaii Women's Military Veterans Task Force as an elected officer. As the task force's treasurer, Ms. Fernandez has continually impressed me with her dedication and desire to complete tasks with due diligence and attention to detail.

In the year I have known her, Ms. Fernandez has been a consistent, outstanding performer – the “go to girl” – as she utilizes her expertise in business management, financial operations, accounting, information technology and networking to support and expand the task force’s mission. Ms. Fernandez has an excellent attendance record for task force meetings and travels the greatest distance to attend monthly meetings as she flies from Maui to Oahu. On more than one occasion, Ms. Fernandez has stepped up at a moment’s notice to assume additional responsibilities as an elected task force officer and member of the task force’s board of directors. She was a key contributor to the Legislative Report highlighting the needs of women veterans in Hawaii; this report was presented to the Hawaii Senate in January 2013.

As an officer in the military, I have witnessed leadership in many forms. Ms. Fernandez embodies servant leadership in its finest form as she has consistently displayed a strong drive to succeed, confidence, candor, persistence and tenacity that separates her from her peers. As a Hawaii Army National Guard Veteran deployed to support combat activity in the Southwest Asia, Ms. Fernandez understands what it entails to serve. Her selflessness, tireless dedication and ability to coalesce as a team player are the wellspring of her success.

Ms. Fernandez represents the modern veteran as she has utilized the skill set she attained in the military – combined with her intelligence and strong work ethic – to become a young entrepreneur. Ms. Fernandez’s persistence and enthusiasm are evident in her ability to aptly balance the professional and personal spheres as she successfully manages a small business, leads by example, and inspires an excess of 14,000 women veterans towards personal improvement and empowerment.

In summary, Ms. Fernandez is a key member of the Hawaii Women’s Military Veterans Task Force. I wholeheartedly support her appointment to the Advisory Board on Veterans Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Chelsea Ann Fernandez’s confirmation and consideration.

**From:** Carmelaub@aol.com [mailto:Carmelaub@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 21, 2013 2:11 PM  
**To:** PSMTestimony  
**Subject:** Fwd: confirmation hearing for Maui County Representative

Subj: confirmation hearing for Maui County Representative SB573

Aloha,

The Maui County Veterans Council respectfully requests that you do **NOT** confirm Chelsea Fernandez in the position of representative to OVS.

This has nothing to do with the person of Ms. Fernandez.

Our problem is that she is too young and has too many personal responsibilities to carry out her mission. Her primary function as a mother and a businessperson has not allowed her to fulfill her function with the Maui County Veterans Council.

She has attended **NO** meetings of the Council since her interim appointment, and has made **NO** effort to determine the needs and desires of the Council. She has made it clear that she has **no** intention of meeting with the Council on its regular meeting dates.

We do understand, thru another source, that she has been in regular communication with the OVS thru its teleconferencing but has passed **NO** information of ANY sort back to the Council.

Accordingly we have had **NO** representation with the OVS except with Ms. Jackson who does attend our meetings regularly.

Ms. Fernandez was recommended by Col. Lloyd Sodeani, our former representative, who announced that the OVS **demand** was for a young female. He did not consult the Council about what we wanted in any way.

What the Council desires is an older, perhaps retired person, who can actually make our meetings and who cares enough to be in contact with our Council. We would be more than happy to send you a list of 1/2 dozen nominees for selection.

In the alternative, we request that you appoint **no one** to the position as we do not want you to believe that we have representation when, in fact, we do not.

Thank You very much,

Paul Laub  
President  
Maui County Veterans Council

From: michael.covich@gmail.com [mailto:michael.covich@gmail.com]  
Sent: Friday, February 22, 2013 12:53 PM  
To: PSMTestimony  
Subject: GM 573

Dear Sen. I have been veterans advocate on Maui for 20 years I am president of the Vietnam veterans of Maui County I am in full support of Chelsea Fernandez for Gov.'s advisory board it is important that somebody of this generation for particularly a woman that understands the needs of the younger veterans be appointed to this position sincerely Michael John covich president Vietnam veterans of Maui County



**GM573**

Submitted on: 2/20/2013

Testimony for PSM on Feb 26, 2013 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ann Greenlee	Individual	Support	No

Comments: i support this nomination. Ms Frenandez will do an excellent job representing Maui's veterans and women veterans specifically.

February 22, 2013

To Honorable Will Espero, Chairman

The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations  
and Military Affairs.

RE: Support to confirm Chelsea Ann Fernandez, Advisory Board, Office of Veterans  
Services (Maui Representative)

I humbly ask for your approval and confirmation of Chelsea Ann Fernandez to the Advisory Board of the Office of Veteran Services Maui Representative. Although I'm employed as a Veteran Representative with the State of Hawaii, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, I'm submitting testimony as a personal friend.

Chelsea has been very active in Veteran's Affairs here on Maui. She is very concerned about their benefits and well being. As one of the first Army Reserve unit to deploy to Iraq in 2006, she has never lost sight in caring for brothers and sisters who served. Being of this new generation of veterans, she understands their needs and struggles as they re-enter civilian life after deployment.

As her resume shows, Chelsea has all the quality and skills necessary to become a successful Advisory Board Member for the Office of Veteran Services (Maui Representative). Above all, she has the heart for veterans. I strongly recommend her for confirmation.

Sincerely,

Donn Mitsuyuki

My name is Linda A. Martin, a Vietnam-Era Veteran, 1962-1965 who is supporting Chelsea Fernandez for appointment to the Advisory Board on Veterans Services; term to expire June 30, 2016.

Chelsea served as committee co-chair for a veterans' event planned on Maui. As a volunteer assisting her for this event, I observed her vitality and enthusiasm in trying to bring to Maui veterans, a deserved recognition for their service to our country. She assimilated very well with representative veterans of WW II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Her interaction with the civilians who currently work with the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary groups on Maui and active duty members of the military was effortless.

In November 2012, I again met Chelsea at a Maui event for women veterans. The Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB) sought out her leadership for a "Women of Power Stand Down". She represented herself as a business woman and owner of Fernan Tech, Inc., a veteran owned, Maui based, tech company. She was able to provide information to several of the participants who attended regarding their status as women veterans on programs that were available to them. Chelsea also demonstrated her net-working skills with the attendees and members of the panel and staff at this MEDB presentation.

I am fully confident that Chelsea will do her utmost to provide information about the programs and services available to the men and women in Hawaii who served in the military. Her passion, energy and experience serving with her military brothers and sisters in Iraq will serve her well.

She stands ready to provide information and assistance and this advisory board will offer the platform from which she can readily do this.

Thank you for your consideration.

**GM573**

Submitted on: 2/22/2013

Testimony for PSM on Feb 26, 2013 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Keith T. Ribbentrop	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support the Nomination of Ms. CHELSEA FERNANDEZ for membership on the Governors Advisory Board - she is a strong Advocate for our States Veterans

**Michael Golojuch, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)**  
**92-954 Makakilo Drive #71**  
**Kapolei, Hawaii 96707-1340**

**February 25, 2013**

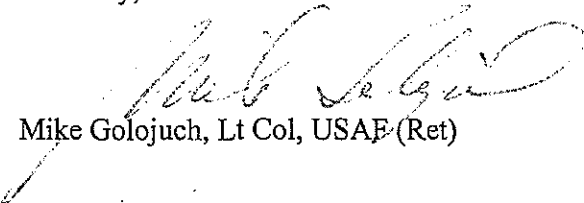
**Senator Will Espero, Chair**  
**Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice-Chair**  
**Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs**  
Hearing on February 26, 2012 at 2:45 PM – GM573

RE: Testimony in Support of Chelsea Fernandez for appointment to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services

I have had the opportunity to work with Chelsea Fernandez on the Veterans' Services Advisory Board on several occasions. She is an advocate for veterans and has monitored various veteran related projects on Maui. She is an asset and needs to be on this board.

I urge the committee to vote to confirm Chelsea Fernandez. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on her behalf.

Sincerely,



Mike Golojuch, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)



February 25, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am so honored to have the opportunity to support Chelsea Fernandez for the Veterans Advisory Board. I apologize I am not there in person to testify, but am out of state on business travel. Chelsea has been a supporter of MEDB's Women In Technology (WIT) program which is a statewide education and workforce development initiative encouraging and supporting our local students to enter into the Science, Tech, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and Ag careers. In addition, she has served as a leader with our Business and Professional Women (BPW) – a national organization focused on women's issues.

When one meets Chelsea, you will notice immediately how understated she is, but in reality she is extremely effective, smart, and respected by her fellow soldiers and colleagues. Chelsea is a mother, business owner, college student, and soldier. Chelsea was an active member of the military and served in war. The impact of war, and her experience with reintegrating back into society was not easy. Chelsea openly speaks about her challenges she faced and this first-hand knowledge will provide meaningful insight as the Veterans Advisory Board makes decisions about our Hawaii Veterans. Chelsea was honored during the 2012 Women's Legislative Caucus for her work supporting women veteran issues. As a state and nation, we need to address the many issues facing our returning veterans. Many women Veterans face challenges when returning to civilian life that are different from those of their male counterparts, including raising children on their own or dealing with the psychological after effects of events such as military sexual trauma and combat-related injuries. These issues, without intervention, can put women Veterans at greater risk.

BPW Hawaii, WIT, and the Strategist recently held a Stand Down Women Veterans event to bring our Maui Nui women veterans together to discuss real world topics & issues that are meaningful to our veterans. It truly was an amazing event that showcased the real need to have open dialogue and conversations about what is needed & how we as a community can support them. Chelsea served as one of the co-sponsors for the event & through her network, we had a full house. Chelsea is positioned to truly have an impact on our state & I am very excited that her skills and expertise will be tapped for such an important board.

As the Hawaii State Legislature decides on deserving candidates for the Governor's Advisory Board for Veterans Services, Chelsea definitely rises to the top. Your support of Chelsea will have a true impact on our island Veterans. Thank you for the opportunity to support Chelsea. She is the perfect candidate for the Advisory Board – she is a true leader who is already impacting our Hawaii Veterans.

Mahalo,  
Isla Young  
Director, K-12 STEM Education  
MEDB's Women In Technology  
BPW Hawaii, Maui President  
[isla@medb.org](mailto:isla@medb.org)

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS**

Senator Will Espero, Chair

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, February 26, 2013

TIME: 2:45 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 224

**Strong support for GM573**, confirming appointment of Chelsea Fernandez to the Advisory Board on Veterans Services

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker, and members of the committee.

As a member of the Hawai'i Women's Military Task Force, I have had the opportunity to work with Chelsea first-hand. She is an enthusiastic and active member of our task force and has contributed substantially to our efforts to ascertain the needs of Hawaii's military women.

Her record speaks for itself. She is a Hawai'i Army National Guard Veteran who deployed with her unit to support combat activity in the Southwest Asia. She has received unit commendation awards and an honorable discharge. In 2012, the Women's Legislative Caucus named her a Women of Distinction for her leadership in the community as a young entrepreneur. Her company, FernanTECH Inc, helps the physically challenged with opportunities for rehabilitation and employment.

She has offered her services to help stand-down events on Maui and Oahu. Stand Down is a military term. It's a safe position off of the combat zone where weary soldiers retreat to rest, reboot and re-energize. One such event, Women of Power Stand Down, was held on July 12, 2012. About a hundred women veterans attended. The event focused on practical life-skills to help women veterans thrive in a new career out of uniform.

Women veterans returning home from war are at high risk for combat related injuries, unemployment and homelessness. theStrategist™, a private firm that specializes in designing healthcare transformations that save lives and money, organized and led the event. The U.S. Department of Labor funded part of the event.

Women comprise 15% of all troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. **Hawai'i has one of the highest rates of women veterans in the country.** Post 9/11 women veterans are twice more likely to be unemployed than women who have not served in the military. At the Women of Power Stand Down, women veterans shared their experiences, struggles and triumphs in transitioning from a military career to life after combat. Chelsea played a major role in this event. She will be a strong asset to the Advisory Board on Veterans Services.

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to testify,

Ann S. Freed

Member, Hawai'i Military Women's Task Force

808-623-5676

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY

GM 573 Submitting for consideration and confirmation  
To the Advisory Board on Veterans Services,  
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CHELSEA ANN FERNANDEZ for a term to expire  
6-30-2016

PRESENTATION TO THE

SENATE COMMITTEE PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

MAXINE CAVANAUGH USCG RETIRED  
MEMBER HAWAII WOMEN'S MILITARY VETERANS TASK FORCE

February 26, 2013

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker and Committee members:

I support the GM 573 confirmation of Chelsea Ann Fernandez to be appointed to the Advisory Board on Veterans Services for a term to expire June 30, 2016.

Chelsea Ann Fernandez has served as a member of the Hawaii Women's Military Veterans Task Force since its inception in 2012. She has served as our Finance Officer as well as creating a Hawaii Women's Military Veterans Task Force web page where interested Veterans can find out about more about programs and services offered to the 14,000 Women Veterans here in Hawaii.

Additionally, she has been active in creation of the report provided to the Legislature highlighting the needs of women veterans and future initiatives. I believe that Chelsea Ann Fernandez well represents veterans, especially women veterans, and that she would serve the State well in this appointment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Chelsea Ann Fernandez's confirmation and consideration.