GM 622

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, RACHEL JAMES, for a term to expire 6-30-2017

STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR MESSAGE 622
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS' SERVICES
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, RACHEL JAMES
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-2017

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

BY

MAJOR GENERAL DARRYLL D. M. WONG ADJUTANT GENERAL AND DIRECTOR OF STATE CIVIL DEFENSE April 10, 2014

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs.

I am Major General Darryll D. M. Wong, Adjutant General and Director of State Civil Defense. I am testifying in **SUPPORT** of gubernatorial nominee Rachel James to the Advisory Board of Veterans' Services.

Rachel James is an excellent choice to serve on the Advisory Board of Veterans' Services. Her work at Catholic Charities Hawaii centered on veterans, especially those homeless and at-risk. Her volunteer experiences with the Hawaii Women Military Veterans Committee focused on identifying the specific needs of women veterans. Her current position with Representative Tulsi Gabbard, a stanch veterans advocate, will expand her contacts within the veterans' network. These positions will enhance her effectiveness as a member of the board.

I am in full SUPPORT of her nomination to serve on the Advisory Board of Veterans' Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony.

STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON GM 622,

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, RACHEL JAMES for a term to expire June 30, 2017.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

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

April 10, 2014

Good afternoon Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in support** of the appointment of Rachel James to the State Advisory Board on Veterans Services.

Rachel James volunteered to serve her country in uniform as a member of the United States Navy and continues to serve as a staff member for the office of U.S. Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard.

In 2012, she was handpicked to be a member and elected Secretary of the State Women's Military and Veteran Task Force. In the Task Force, she help to compile a comprehensive legislative report, created a local website, and sponsored several Women Veteran Stand-Down Events on several islands. This same task force has now become a permanent Sub-Committee under the State Advisory Board on Veterans Services.

Rachel has always been quick to help those in need. As a staff in-take counselor for Catholic Charities, she has helped to transform the lives of many citizens and Veterans in the State of Hawaii by giving them hope, shelter, and employment opportunities. In one vivid case, thanks to Rachel's efforts and guidance, a homeless female Veteran received support and care for five months and entered a vital training program to earn her a job. From this job, she was able to get back on her feet and pay her rent, bills, and mortgage. More importantly, she got back her dignity and self-esteem knowing that with just a little help she could make it on her own. Rachel was the catalyst for this individual and for many others.

There is no doubt in my mind that Rachel will do an exceptional job as a member of the State Advisory Board on Veterans Services. She possesses a positive "can-do"

attitude, has a reputation of going above and beyond on what is asked of her, and genuinely cares for those she interacts with.

Highly recommend your favorable consideration for her and that she be afforded this important opportunity to serve in this voluntary capacity to help our Veterans and their families.

GM622

Submitted on: 4/3/2014

Testimony for PSM on Apr 10, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stanley Lum	Armed Services YMCA of Honolulu	Support	No

Comments: You will be very pleased with Ms. James. I strongly support her for the position.

Testimony on Behalf of Rachel James

I have known Rachel James for 5 years and have observed, monitored, and measured her workload, energy, creativity, and initiative. She is a person to have on one's team. She is the consummate professional with a sophisticated style and strong work ethic. I strongly recommend Rachel for the position herein.

Date:

April 6, 2014

To:

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

From:

Mike Golojuch, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Chair, Advisory Board on Veterans' Services

Subject:

GM622, Support for Rachel James, Appointment to Advisory Board on Veterans'

Services

It is my pleasure to support Rachel James' nomination for the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services.

As a member of the Advisory Board, I know that Ms. James' work with the Hawaii Women Military Veterans Task Force shows her ability to handle tasks as they relate to veterans. Her service to the country in the Navy gives her the firsthand knowledge when it comes to working for veterans and their varied issues.

Her experiences will be extremely beneficial in carrying out her advisory function for veterans' issues, legislative proposals and program operations of the Office of Veterans' Services.

I again ask that you support her nomination to the Advisory Board of the Office Veterans' Services.

Senator Will Espero Chairman Public Safety, Government Operations and Military Affairs Council Senatorial District 19 Hawaii State Capitol, Room 231 Honolulu, HI 96813

Vice-Chair Rosalyn H. Baker Senatorial District 6 Hawaii State Capitol, Rm 230 Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: State Advisory Board on Veteran Services, nominee Ms. Rachel James

April 9, 2014

Aloha Senator Espero,

I endorse the nomination of Rachel James as a member of the Advisory Board on Veteran Services. I am familiar with the work of Ms. James through her position as the District Director for Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard. Rachel works diligently to seek solutions to day to day challenges as well as worked collaboratively with the team to ensure mission completion.

Rachel brings experience from a diverse background of service, which could benefit veterans and active duty service members in the transition back into the communities and civilian life. She serves the constituents of Hawaii's second district under the leadership of Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, who strongly supports service members and veterans. Rachel has the opportunity to use her previous year's experiences to contribute to solutions for veterans and civilians in communities across the state.

She volunteered her time as the secretary of the Hawaii Women Military Veterans Task Force, working to identify successes and areas for improvement of services for Hawaii Women Military Veterans. Rachel's coordination with both veteran service providers and community services providers gives her perspective in addressing the concerns of Hawaii's veterans. Her experience and drive are valuable additions to the congressional team.

My work with Rachel James moves me to support her nomination. I believe the State will benefit from appointing Rachel as a member of the State Advisory Board on Veteran Services.

District Director

Office of Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard

From:

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov

Sent:

Monday, April 07, 2014 1:38 PM

To:

PSMTestimony

Cc:

jay.king@mail.house.gov

Subject:

Submitted testimony for GM622 on Apr 10, 2014 14:45PM

Attachments:

Rachel James Letter of Support.pdf

GM622

Submitted on: 4/7/2014

Testimony for PSM on Apr 10, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jay King	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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TULSI GABBARD

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER AND MARITIME SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Congress of the United States Bouse of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-1102

April 7, 2014

Senator Will Espero Chairman Public Safety, Government Operations and Military Affairs Council Senatorial District 19 Hawali State Capitol, Room 231 Honolulu, HI 96813

Vice-Chair Rosalyn H. Baker Senatorial District 6 Hawaii State Capitol, Rm 230 Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: The nomination of Ms. Rachel James to the State Advisory Board on Veteran Services

Dear Senators,

I am writing this letter to kindly pass on my recommendation for Rachel James.

I first started professionally collaborating with Rachel James when she worked for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program at Catholic Charities Hawaii, and I was the Community and Veterans Resources Coordinator for the Institute for Human Services. She was the proven person to call when there was a tough case. She serves genuine attention to each client with consummate respect. Through all the work that Rachel does for the disenfranchised military veteran community, she does with extreme grace and professional bearing.

I was later hired by the Office of Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard to be one of their Congressional Caseworkers. As we built our office team, Rachel James was the one I told Congresswoman Gabbard, "You need to recruit her. She is one of the good ones." Tulsi agreed, and Rachel joined the team.

Rachel has proven herself a valuable asset to Congresswoman Tulsi Gababard's Office. She entered the political environment of the Congressional Casework and federal legislation and has fast become a well-known leader in her field. She handles the toughest problems with professional grace. Rachel works diligently to seek solutions and works collaboratively to ensure mission accomplishment

Rachel shares her passion to serve with pure intentions and strong heart. I believe that she possesses qualities that you just can't teach. She has intelligence and poise that simultaneously radiates confidence and kindness. I have witnessed how her accepting presence reassures people in need and inspires leaders to try and make her part of their team. They gravitate towards her and trust without fear or reservation. Our military veteran communities need someone like Rachel to genuinely pay attention to them. She shines with a genuine desire to learn the story of others and develop solutions for the individual and the system.

300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 5–104 Honolulu, Hi 95850 (808) 541–1980

502 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-4906

http://www.gabbard.housa.gov

TULSI GABBARD

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER AND MARIT ME SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Washington, **DC** 20515-1102

360 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD, FLOOM 5-104 HONOLULU, HI 96850 (808) 541-1985

502 Cannon House Office Building Washington, QC 20515 (202) 225-4908

vog.gaugd.braddag.www/tigmt

Rachel's professional accomplishments prove she is of rare quality and an authentic example of commitment to community. Her coordination and collaboration with both veteran service providers and community services providers gives her a welcomed perspective in addressing the concerns of Hawaii's military veterans. Her experience and drive are valuable additions to the team here at Congresswoman Gabbard's office. My professional experience with Rachel James inspires me to support her nomination as I believe the State will benefit from appointing Rachel as a member of the State Advisory Board on Veteran Services.

Sincerely,

Jay King

Constituent Services Liaison
The Office of Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard
300 Ala Moana Blvd. 5-104
Honolulu, HI 96850
Jay.King@mail.house.gov

From:

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov

Sent:

Friday, April 04, 2014 9:27 AM

To:

PSMTestimony

Cc:

jcheever@revolusun.com

Subject:

Submitted testimony for GM622 on Apr 10, 2014 14:45PM

GM622

Submitted on: 4/4/2014

Testimony for PSM on Apr 10, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John Cheever	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I have known Rachel for three years now in her capacity as a field coordinator for Kuleana Micro-Lending. She was recommended to us by her HPU professor as someone who could help us in our efforts to identify low-income candidates for micro-loans and then work with them to see their businesses through to fruition and sustained success. The word her HPU professor used to describe why he was referring Rachel to us was that she is "special." That has definitely turned out to be true as Rachel has exhibited initiative and follow-through from the start. In addition to her always positive outlook and steady presence at meetings, Rachel took it upon herself to create her own business cards and attend events where she might meet potential candidates for our services. She also launched our website to make our services known to the broader public. Her greatest success has been helping a former veteran who had fallen on hard times (due to drug addiction and other destructive behaviors)— but had started to pull his life together— to start his own business. This individual had lost his family, had served time in prison, and for a time was homeless. Rachel encountered him at a veterans event and encouraged him to start on the path of creating his own business. With Rachel's leadership and the assistance of other people in our organization and affiliated resources we helped this individual get a small loan to pay off his outstanding fines and reinstate his driver's license. We also provided him a vehicle, a computer, legal advice, permitting advice, accounting assistance, leads for clients, and a larger loan through Pacific Gateway Center to purchase his equipment. He now has his own business and a contract washing trucks on the weekends for Hawaii Gas while also working a full-time job during the week to support his new family. There have definitely been bumps along the road, but Rachel has been there throughout to provide guidance. This individual is now on the path to turning his life around. The vast majority of the credit for that belongs to Rachel, although she would be the first to deflect that credit to others. The bottom line is Rachel cares, and she takes that emotion and translates it into constructive actions to make the community better. I wholeheartedly support the nomination of Rachel James to serve on the State Advisory Board for Veteran Services. She will be credit to the organization and the community. Mahalo. John Cheever President/Executive Director Kuleana Micro-Lending

Please note that testimony submitted <u>less than 24 hours prior to the hearing</u>, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Carswell J. Ross, Jr. M.A., Chief Master Sergeant, USAF Ret. 94-1020 Puana Street Waipahu, HI 96797

Presentation to the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs Thursday, April 10, 2014 @ 2:45 p.m.

Testimony on GM 622, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, RACHEL JAMES, for term to expire 6-30-2017

Good afternoon Chair Espiro and Vic Chair Baker and members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs. I strongly **support** the nomination of Ms. Rachel James to the Office of Veterans' Services, Advisory Board on Veterans' Services. I have known Ms. James for many years and I have work with her on several projects concerning veterans and women veteran's issues. During my work with Ms. James, I have found her to be an excellent provider of information based upon her experience in providing services to veterans and other low income individuals seeking assistance. She is mindful for their problems, respectful of their standing as individuals, and diligent in assuring that appropriate guidance and services are provided to these individuals.

She served in the U.S. Navy and is aware of the sacrifices made during service to this Nation's Military. Presently she serves with me and several others on the Hawaii Women Military Veterans Task Force, which has become a subcommittee of the Advisory Board. Her appointment will assure that the fastest growing segment of veterans, women veterans, will have a voice and be represented during deliberations. Her insight into the operations and services provided by the non-profit sector to veterans will increase the knowledge base of the Board.

I believe that Ms. James is an excellent candidate for membership to the Board and ask for your favorable consideration and confirmation of Rachel James. Thank you for the opportunity to support the nomination of this exceptional candidate.

From:

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov

Sent:

Thursday, April 03, 2014 12:52 PM

To:

PSMTestimony

Cc:

greenlee@hawaii.rr.com

Subject:

Submitted testimony for GM622 on Apr 10, 2014 14:45PM

GM622

Submitted on: 4/3/2014

Testimony for PSM on Apr 10, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ann Greenlee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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GM 622

Senator Will Espero Chairman Public Safety, Government Operations and Military Affairs Council Senatorial District 19 Hawaii State Capitol, Room 231 Honolulu, HI 96813

Vice-Chair Rosalyn H. Baker Senatorial District 6 Hawaii State Capitol, Rm 230 Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: The nomination of Ms. Rachel James to the State Advisory Board on Veteran Services

Dear Senators,

As a United States Veteran, I was delighted to discover Rachel James' nomination to continue her service as a member of the Advisory Board on Veteran Services. Ms. James has served United States Veterans proudly and effectively. During my personal struggles with housing on Oahu, Ms. James not only directed me to appropriate services, but also helped me get settled. She has been a guiding light of encouragement I feel I couldn't have done without. Today, I am a small business that is working hard to bring new mobile related services to Oahu that does not exist here today. Without her unbridled belief in providing help to those who need it, our community would be absent a truly dedicated individual.

Along with her volunteerism directly helping her community, Rachel has dedicated her life to not only working to help Veterans of all walks on Oahu, but countless individuals throughout her time here. Her encouragement has propelled me forward, creating hope and dedication to see another small business succeed at a time when our economy struggles.

Hawaii, and Oahu have already benefited tremendously from the efforts of Ms. James and the countless lives she has touched. I raise my hand and my voice as testimony to the efforts she has generously provided to make our lives just that much better. I hope your vote counts not only toward Ms. James confirmation, but all of the Veterans and citizens of Oahu that struggle each day to make our State the finest in America.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Smith U.S. Air Force Veteran Hawaii Entrepreneur TESTIMONY
OF
RACHEL JAMES
TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE

PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS
ON
APRIL 10, 2014
GM 622

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, Gubernatorial nominee, RACHEL M. JAMES, for a term to expire June 30, 2017.

Senator Espero and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I'd like to thank Governor Neil Abercrombie for nominating me, as I am honored and humbled by his nomination of my appointment to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services.

I would also like to thank the individuals who've encouraged me to pursue this appointment and to those who have submitted letters of support on my behalf. I appreciate those of you who have taken the time to attend this afternoon as well and thank you all for your continued support.

It's taken a bit of time for me to establish just what I wanted to say in my personal testimony in support of my appointment to the Advisory Board for Veterans' Services. With the knowledge that this information will become public record and the desire to in some way impart a bit of who I am to each of you, I've determined that it is both my personal and professional experiences that have prepared me for service as a member of the Advisory Board for Veterans' Services.

From a young age, I had the fortune of being raised in a small town adjacent to an Army Base in Arizona. The town's proximity to the base afforded me the regular opportunity to see how a community could support its service members locally. As I grew up and became more involved in my community and my mom joined the Army Reserves I was introduced to military life and what life as a service member could be. These early experiences coupled with my desire to discover how my contribution could affect my community and country encouraged me to enlist in the United States Navy shortly after graduating from community college with a degree in Psychology. In boot camp I earned the distinction of Military Excellence Award winner, but that accomplishment was quickly overshadowed by my early exit from the Navy with a discharge classification of "General Under Honorable Conditions". The stark difference of those two indicators, one of excellence and one of generality, I believe speak to some of the areas of concern within the military structure and culture that are being addressed with increasing frequency today.

My personal active duty experiences in conjunction with the years I spent as a military spouse, (assuming the role of Family Readiness Group Leader to my then husband's company) and later working with junior enlisted soldiers and their families as the Office Manager at the Armed Services YMCA that I believe provides me with a unique perspective and experience based skill set. After volunteering in my community for various service projects and completing my undergraduate degree in Business Accounting, I found myself in search of new ways to apply the skills and education I had earned/learned thus far. These experiences encouraged me to pursue a position on a then newly developed grant program, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) at Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) in 2011. After securing a position on the SSVF team, I went on to complete my graduate degree in Global Leadership and Sustainable

Development. Through my work as a Housing Specialist at CCH, I had the opportunity to continue my service to the men and women who have served as I worked with veteran families to support, establish and sustain housing. My work with veterans in need presented me with the honor of serving on the Hawaii Military Women Veterans Task Force (HWMVTF). I served alongside women who have served this nation to address the availability of veteran services specific to women veterans in the State of Hawaii.

It was in my role as the Secretary of the HWMVTF that I began to hear my military experiences echoed in the stories of women who had served in various branches of services and in various times of war and peace. Now, nearly ten years after I was discharged from the Navy I look back at my trend of service and notice a common thread...connection to the US Military.

Upon learning that there was position availability on the Advisory Board for Veterans

Services, I was encouraged to apply. I am honored by the Governor's nomination and welcome
this opportunity to serve alongside a group of outstanding individuals. Their collective
experience and expertise have guided service establishment and improvement for veterans in the
State of Hawaii. Senators, I hope that you find my experiences to be indicative of my desire and
ability to be of service and ask that you confirm my appointment as a member of the Advisory
Board for Veterans Services. I am committed to learning more and am eager to merge the wealth
of information that exists within the members of the Advisory Board on Veterans Services with
experience and knowledge I've gained from working with both community and veteran service
agencies. I believe that as a community we are responsible for welcoming veterans and for
partnering with veteran services organizations to provide the best services available to those who
have answered the call to serve. Thank you for this opportunity to serve my community in a new
capacity. I look forward to many more opportunities to do so and look forward to getting to

know each of you better during my term should you chose to confirm my appointment to the Advisory Board on Veterans Services.

Mahalo Nui Loa for your time and consideration,

Rachel James

Aloha Senator Espero,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. Please find my responses to your inquiries listed below.

- (1) Why do you wish to be a member of the Advisory Board on Veterans Services? I wish to be a member of the Advisory Board on Veteran Affairs, because I believe that veterans in Hawaii have earned many things, amongst them excellent service. I would like to be a member of the advisory board, because I believe excellent service is multi-faceted. I feel that my contribution to the advisory board will be unique and will lend itself well to the honorable work that has already been done to continually improve access to and quality of veteran services.
- (2) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Advisory Board on Veterans Services, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member of the Advisory Board on Veterans Services. I believe that the time I've spent in service roles will be of value to the existing team of board members. I have been fortunate to work with both active duty service members and veterans and have an understanding of some of the barriers to access that veterans face. I am honored to have served as a member of the Hawaii Military Women Veterans Task Force and believe that the work done with the task force will feed nicely into the work I hope to do with the members of the advisory board. I believe my greatest skill is to learn and apply new information in a timely manner. I believe this will be a beneficial skill as veteran services continue to grow and diversify as the needs of veterans take on a new face. I feel that my familiarity with both veteran and community service providers will be of value to the board and will serve as a solid basis for understanding ideas for how to best provide veteran services that best address the needs of Hawaii's veteran population.
- (3) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service? During my term of service I hope to facilitate the connection of veterans to community resources and to provide opportunities for veterans to successfully transition to civilian life while still maintaining the security and support their time in service has earned them. I hope to encourage more community organizations to develop programs that are veteran-centric while also encouraging veterans to

be more involved in their communities. It is my hope that my time in service will support the creation of lasting initiatives that not only provide service to Hawaii's veterans but that also creates opportunities for the community to benefit from the wealth of veterans who've chose to remain in the State.

(4) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Advisory Board on Veterans Services? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?

I do not foresee any conflicts of interest, but were any to arise; I would quickly bring the matter to the attention of the board and the involved party/parties to discuss possibilities for a timely resolution. I am fortunate to be employed by a member of Congress who believes in supporting our veterans both here in Hawaii and across the nation. If I were to foresee anything it would be great opportunity for complementary possibilities rather than possibilities of conflictual nature.

Thank you again for this opportunity, Senator Espero.

Aloha, Rachel James