

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2072 HD1 SD1
A BILL RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

PRESENTATION TO
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BY

MAJOR GENERAL DARRYLL D. M. WONG
ADJUTANT GENERAL AND DIRECTOR OF STATE CIVIL DEFENSE
March 28, 2014

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and the Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

I am Major General Darryll D. M. Wong, Adjutant General and Director of State Civil Defense. I am testifying in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 2072 HD1 SD1.

House Bill 2072 establishes a Women's Veterans Coordinator position within the Office of Veterans Services. Current reports estimate there are between 9,500 and 11,750 women veterans who reside in the State of Hawaii. These numbers will rise as more women choose to serve in the armed forces.

Women veterans have a great need for an advocate for their many challenges. Some of the challenges they face include:

- Women veterans suffer higher rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- They are the fastest growing segment of adults faced with homelessness
- The national unemployment rate for women who served in the military after 9/11 is 17.3% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 2012)

The need for a Women's Veterans Coordinator in the Office of Veterans Services is clear. This coordinator will be the strong advocate for women veterans. I ask you support this initiative.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 2072 HD1 SD1.

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HB 2072, HD1 (SSCR2948)
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BY

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

March 28, 2014

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee members:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of the concepts on House Bill 2072, HD1, Relating to Department of Defense which establishes a Women's Veterans Coordinator position within the Office of Veterans Services.

The OVS organized a Women's Military/Veterans Task Force committee to address the needs of our women veterans and from that Task Force they submitted a report of their finds to our Legislature. Two months ago, the Women Military/Veterans committee became a subcommittee under the Advisory Board on Veterans Services, still addressing issues pertaining to Women Veterans.

We have an influx of women veterans that have health and other issues during their visits to the office looking for assistance which only a female veteran would be able to relate. The coordinator will be able to help define programs that will be able to help these veterans and be able to refer them to support agencies as well as conduct other counseling duties assigned by the Director, OVS.

In the near future, plans are being crafted in partnership with Veterans Affairs (VA), State, County and private agencies in having women's veterans issues shared on the national stage during the annual Women's Veterans Summit comprised of representatives from all 50 States and territories. Our neighbor islands are also looking at specific programs, like Homeless Female Veterans, and providing outreach to them with support from various Federal, State, private and non-profit agencies.

Both OVS and VA recognize the strong need to develop programs and to address pertinent issues affecting this fastest growing group of veterans.

We fully support these initiatives and know that there is a need for a Women's Veterans Coordinator to support these types of issues.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Hawaii's Veteran community.

Date: March 26, 2014

To: The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

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

Subject: Strong Support for HB2072, HD1, SD1

As the Chair, Advisory Board to the Office of Veterans' Services, which represents over 170,000 Hawaii veterans, we strongly support HB2072. Our board felt it important that women veterans' issues be heard that we incorporated the Women Veterans Task Force as a subcommittee. This bill supports our efforts. It will ensure that the 11,000 plus female veterans have a voice in Hawaii.

It is important to both establish the position within the Office of Veterans' Services (OVS) and to fund the position.

Consider the high number of military sexual trauma cases, with many more unreported cases, it is important to have a female position within OVS. There are other re-entry issues noted in the bill that could be better addressed having a woman reviewing female veteran issues.

As always, this is another positive way to repay veterans for the sacrifices they made.

The Board strongly urges that you pass this measure and make funds available.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the views of the Advisory Board.



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**Testimony of
Thomas Smyth
Military Officers Association of America, Hawaii Chapter
Before the
Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, March 28, 2014, 9:20 pm, Room 211
HB 2072 HD1 SD1 Relating to the Department of Defense
Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Committee Members**

Our chapter of 500 retired and currently serving officers of the Uniformed Services supports the intent of HB 2072 HD1 SD1, as amended. It provides a Veterans Coordinator in the Office of Veterans Services.

We note that SD1 unfortunately removes the designation of a Women's Veterans Coordinator from earlier versions of the bill. With the increasing percentage of women veterans among all the armed services, it is particularly important they have someone to specifically represent them, given the complexity of programs and services available to them.

My experience commanding the only Army or Marine Corps combat support unit to have a full complement of women officer and enlisted billets showed me how essential it was for the women to have another woman to share experiences with. The men in my unit, even those with lengthy service experience, often did not have the same ability to deal with all of the issues that came up both here in Hawaii and when deployed.

The primary issues military women face are not sexual assault, but are at least as much related to women's issues such as medical treatment, pregnancy, etc. We urge your committee to restore the HD1 version.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: sonnyfernan@msn.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2072 on Mar 28, 2014 09:20AM
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 11:27:49 PM

HB2072

Submitted on: 3/25/2014

Testimony for WAM on Mar 28, 2014 09:20AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stanley Y. Fernandez Sr.	Individual	Support	No

Comments: In support of HB2072. We need to take care of our Women veterans who volunteered their services to our country and nation.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, 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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