

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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

PRESENTATION TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BY

MAJOR GENERAL DARRYLL D. M. WONG
ADJUTANT GENERAL AND DIRECTOR OF STATE CIVIL DEFENSE
February 20, 2014

Chair Luke, Vice Chairs Nishimoto and Johanson, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I am Major General Darryll D. M. Wong, State Adjutant General and the Director of State Civil Defense. I am testifying in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 2072 HD 1.

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. This 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.

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HB 2072, HD1 (HSCR 518-14)
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BY

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

February 20, 2014

Chair Luke, Vice Chairs Nishimoto & Johanson 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 is now 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 these support agencies as well as conduct other 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 in OVS.

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

Date: February 18, 2014

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
The Honorable Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

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

Subject: Strong Support for HB2072, HD1

As the Chair, Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, let me state that 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 meager 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. Without the funding it becomes an empty jester.

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.

The Uniformed Service Member's Voice in Government
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR UNIFORMED SERVICES
Hawaii Chapter (HI-1)

FEBRUARY 18, 2014

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2072 HD1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
HEARING ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 AT 11:00 AM
IN CONFERENCE ROOM 308

Aloha Chair Luke and Vice Chairs Nishimoto and Johanson: Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2072 (HB2072 HD1). On Capitol Hill the National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS) is "The Service Member's Voice in Government." Here, in the great State of Hawaii, NAUS Hawaii Chapter (HI-1) serves at the will and pleasure of our nation's largest per-capita uniformed service personnel and veterans community.

NAUS Hawaii Chapter (HI-1) is extremely grateful, regarding your thoughtful efforts to establish a Women's Veterans Coordinator position within the Office of Veterans Services. Effective July 1, 2014.

We believe HB2072 will help relieve anxiety our female veterans may be currently experiencing, regarding delivery of their earned health care benefits. If this mission is successful, we respectfully suggest establishing a counterpart Men's Veterans Coordinator position may be in order.

Our female veterans, who served us so selflessly, sincerely appreciate this proposed benefit: We very respectfully encourage you to pass HB2072 HD1 as written.

At your service,

D Egge

Dennis Egge; Chapter President



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Hawaii Chapter, MOAA
P.O. Box 1185
Kailua, Hawaii 96734-1185

**Testimony of
Thomas Smyth
Military Officers Association of America, Hawaii Chapter
Before the
Committee on Finance**

Thursday, February 20, 2014, 11:00 am, Room 308

HB 2072 HD1 Relating to the Department of Defense

Chair Luke, Vice Chairs Nishimoto and Johanson and Committee Members

Our chapter of 500 retired and currently serving officers of the Uniformed Services strongly supports HB 2072 HD1, as amended. This timely bill provides a Women's Veterans Coordinator in the state Office of Veterans Services.

We note that with the increasing percentage of women veterans among all the armed services, it is particularly important they have someone to represent them, given the complexity of programs and services available to them.

I had the experience of commanding the only Army or Marine Corps battalion-sized combat support unit to have a full complement of women officer and enlisted billets. 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 for her in Hawaii and when deployed. This Women's Veterans Coordinator will provide such a support person.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

HAWAII
STATE
COMMISSION
ON THE
STATUS
OF
WOMEN



Chair
LESLIE WILKINS

COMMISSIONERS:

ELENA CABATU
CARMILLE LIM
AMY MONK
LISA ELLEN SMITH
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February 20, 2014

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Representative Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Cathy Betts, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in Support, HB 2072, Relating to the Department of Defense

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 2072, which would create and appropriate funds for a Women's Veteran Coordinator within the Office of Veterans Services. The preliminary findings from the Hawaii Military Women's Taskforce revealed that the most pressing issues our female veterans face are military sexual trauma, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), homelessness and joblessness. Currently, there is no specific liaison to assist with women veterans transitioning out of active duty. Creating a position will ensure that women returning to Hawaii from military duty will have the necessary services to transition home safely.

The Commission strongly supports this measure.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



February 20, 2014

TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Finance

FROM: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair

RE: HB 2072 HD1 Relating to the Department of Defense
Hearing: Thursday, February 20, 2014, 11:00 a.m., Room 308

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of HB 2072 HD1 Relating to the Department of Defense which would establish a Women's Veterans Coordinator position in the Office of Veteran Services (OVS).

In 2013 the Hawai'i Military Women's Taskforce submitted a report to the legislature recommending that a Women's Veteran's Coordinator position be established in order to help address the unique needs of women in active duty and of women veterans, needs that are often different from those of their male counterparts. The coordinator will fill a gap in care and will aid with the process of helping the approximately 12,000 women veterans in Hawaii to move forward in their lives. The coordinator would help the OVS to collect data, integrate services and move forward on the Task Force's recommendations.

As with other organizations where women are a distinct minority; programs and services were originally established and created for male populations. Those benefits and services have been designed to address the needs of men rather than women. Women need gender appropriate programs, benefits, and services; nowhere is this more evident than for healthcare services and for military sexual trauma, a result of sexual assault while in the military.

It is important to recognize the specific and distinctive needs of women in their effort to re-enter civilian lives, retrain for new careers, establish homes for themselves and their families, and to care for their families. Establishing a Coordinator position will help focus the OVS on gender appropriate, effective care for women

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls. It is because of this mission, the Women's Caucus supports this important measure.

We thank the committee for this opportunity to submit our testimony.

Testimony for Public Hearing

Committee on Finance

Thursday, February 20th, 2014, 11:00am

Rachel James, Honolulu, Hawaii

Federal Employee and Hawaii Women Military Veterans Committee (HWMVC) Member

HB 2072-Relating to the Department of Defense

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson and committee members. I am a member of the HWMVC and believe HB 207B2-proposing to establish funding for a Women's Veterans Coordinator position is essential. It is important to ensure that all veterans receive quality services as their quality service to this country earned them an opportunity to access their veteran benefits. Part of providing quality service is ensuring that your team is competent and that their background and skillset are complementary to the basic tasks of their position. It is this complementary element that necessitates a women veteran coordinator position be established.

To meet the service standards that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs seeks to uphold, State services must be properly equipped with the personnel to deliver appropriate, personalized and timely service. To meet these standards for the women veteran population here in Hawaii, a Women's Veterans Coordinator is needed. The creation and funding for this position will establish an opportunity for the Hawaii office of Veterans Services to address the specific needs of women veterans.

At present the services currently offered to veterans both male and female are male focused. With a continually increasing number of women in the military, it is reasonable to expect a similar increase in the number of woman military veterans. As such, it is imperative that the Hawaii office of Veterans Services incorporate the position of Women's Veterans Coordinator into their essential personnel category.

For the reasons listed above, I firmly support the establishment and full funding of the Women's Veterans Coordinator position within the Office of Veteran Services.

Thank you for your valuable time and consideration.

With trust and confidence,

Rachel James

Hawaii Military Women's Task Force Committee
Ann S. Freed, Member
19 February 2014

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair

Hearing on HB2072, **Requesting the creation and funding of a veteran women services coordinator position within the Office of Veteran's Services, the State Department of Defense.**

DATE: Thursday, February 20, 2014
TIME: 11:00 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chairs Nishimoto, Johanson and Committee Members,

I am Ann S. Freed, member of The Hawaii Military Women's Task Force Committee and, we are in **strong support** of this measure.

The Task Force was formed by the Legislature in 2012 to address the needs women veterans in Hawaii. We submitted a report to the 2013 Legislature that detailed preliminary findings concerning our women warriors. We found that military sexual trauma (MST) is rampant in the armed services that homelessness and joblessness along with PTSD are some of the major attendant problems that our women face.

Last year's report to the Legislature included a recommendation to create a Women's Services Coordinator position. The position was created as an "additional duty". This year we would like the position to be created and funded within the Office of Veteran's Services (OVS).

If anything the need for the position has become more dire, with every increasing revelations of trauma and abuse suffered by military women at home and abroad. This coupled with the fact that with our longest war winding down, we can expect a flood of women veterans in need of services in our state.

Additionally, some of our women veteran's report that the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System has difficulty hiring and retaining a Women Veterans Program Manager. A social worker is currently the "acting" manager.

The coordinator will fill a gap in care and will aid with the process of helping the approximately 12,000 women veterans in Hawaii to move forward in their lives. She can help the OVS to collect data, integrate services and move forward on the Task Force's recommendations.

Hawaii's military women have served our nation often at great cost to their health, their lives and too often to their human dignity. As a state we need to recognize their sacrifice by addressing their needs.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify

Ann S. Freed
Member, Hawaii Military Women's Task Force

annsfreed@gmail.com
808-623-5676

Testimony

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

Thursday, February 20, 2014 @ 11:00 A.M.

Testimony on House Bill 2072, HD1 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Presentation to the House Committee on Finance

Good morning Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice Chairs Scott Nishimoto, Aaron Johanson, and Members of the Committee on Finance.

I strongly **support** HB 2072, HD1, which established a Women's Veterans Coordinator position within the Office of Veterans Services. I was asked to be an advisor to the Hawaii Military Veterans Women Task Force, due to my experience serving as the Hawaii representative to the National Association of State Women's Veterans Coordinators Conferenced. During my two year tenure I developed a better understanding of the many problems faced by women who served and are serving in the military. Newly released surveys and reports, including the Military Women's Task Force report to the Legislature January 2014, list the following: Women veterans face a multiple inter-related complex problems related to military sexual trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, homelessness, joblessness, and a lack of appropriate health care options.

Women veterans number between 9,500 and 11,700 in Hawaii. This group deserved the same benefits and treatment as their male counterparts. However there are issues that often prevent women veterans from seeking assistance. This is why it is critical that the proposed Women Veterans Coordinator be a woman who has military experience as well as the ability to gather and interpret information, speak before groups and offer individualized services to women. Finally the Women Veterans Coordinator must have funds to attend National conferences such as the National Association of State Women's Veterans Coordinators to learn about other states programs and determine if appropriate for Hawaii's women veteran population.

In closing I remind you that these Women Veterans are mothers, sisters, wives, cousins and daughters. They will return home to Hawaii and should be able to obtain services as needed. That is the least we can do for these warriors.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support** of this measure.

FIN-Jo

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 3:59 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: sonnyfernan@msn.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2072 on Feb 20, 2014 11:00AM

HB2072

Submitted on: 2/18/2014

Testimony for FIN on Feb 20, 2014 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

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

Comments: In Support of HB2072.

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FIN-Jo

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 3:22 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: greenlee@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2072 on Feb 20, 2014 11:00AM*

HB2072

Submitted on: 2/18/2014

Testimony for FIN on Feb 20, 2014 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

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

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2014 4:39 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: keith.ribbentrop@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2072 on Feb 20, 2014 11:00AM



HB2072

Submitted on: 2/19/2014

Testimony for FIN on Feb 20, 2014 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Keith T. Ribbentrop	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support this Bill.

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