

HB 2072 HD1

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Establishes a Women's Veterans Coordinator position within the Office of Veterans' Services to assist women veterans who served on active duty for the full period they were activated and who were discharged with other than a dishonorable discharge. Appropriation.

Effective July 1, 2014. (HB2072 HD1)

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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

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

BY

MAJOR GENERAL DARRYLL D. M. WONG
STATE ADJUTANT GENERAL AND DIRECTOR OF STATE CIVIL DEFENSE
March 13, 2014

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

I am Major General Darryll D. M. Wong, State Adjutant General and Director of State Civil Defense. I am testifying in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 2072 HD2.

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.

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HB 2072, HD1 (HSCR 605-14)
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND
MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

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

March 13, 2014

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker 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 10, 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: Strong Support for HB2072, HD1

As the Chair, Advisory Board to the Office of Veterans' Services representing over 170,000 Hawaii veterans, we strongly support HB2072, HD1. 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 concern for the 11,000 plus female veteran 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.

This is another positive way to repay female 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.



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 Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Thursday, March 13, 2014, 2:45 pm, Room 224
HB 2072 HD1 Relating to the Department of Defense
Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker and Committee Members**

Our chapter of 500 retired and currently serving officers of the Uniformed Services strongly supports HB 2072 HD 1, 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.

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



March 13, 2014

TO: Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

FROM: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair

RE: HB 2072 HD1 Relating to the Department of Defense
Hearing: Thursday, March 13, 2014, 2:45 p.m., Room 224

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.



Planned Parenthood of Hawaii

To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, March 13, 2014, 2:45 p.m.
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Rm. 224
Re: Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Hawaii in support of H.B. 2072, HD1

Dear Chair Espero and Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs,

Planned Parenthood of Hawaii writes in support of H.B. 2072, HD1, which seeks to establish a Women's Veterans Coordinator position with the Office of Veterans' Services.

We support the establishment of a Women's Veterans Coordinator because it will promote the sexual and reproductive health of military women.

Planned Parenthood of Hawaii is dedicated to providing Hawaii's people with high quality, affordable and confidential sexual and reproductive health care, education, and advocacy. Military members and their families, in particular, use our services at a high rate because they are unable to obtain the same confidential care through the military's healthcare system. Sexual violence in the military is a known and present problem, and it is imperative that we provide victims with appropriate and effective health care both during and after their military service. Establishing a Women's Veterans Coordinator will help to ensure that these brave women have the health care that they need and deserve.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Laurie A. Temple
Director of Public Affairs & Government Relations

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Testimony

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

Thursday, March 13, 2014 @ 2:45 P.M.

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

Presentation to the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Good morning Chair Will Espero and Vice Chair Rosalyn Baker and members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs.

I strongly **support the concept** of 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.

HD1 proposed to serve only women veterans. The data shows that 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. The position must not be restricted to providing services to "only Women" as about three percent of military sexual trauma victims are men. Additionally, the Women Veterans Coordinator position 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 veteran population with emphasis on women veterans. Another issues proposed by HD1 is to offer services to only military members with honorable discharges. The HRS 363-1 Definitions provides a definition of veterans. It does not restrict services and is appropriate because the Office of Veterans Services assist veterans upgrade their discharges.

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 suggestions to modify this measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2014 3:43 PM
To: PSMTestimony
Cc: sonnyfernan@msn.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2072 on Mar 13, 2014 14:45PM

HB2072

Submitted on: 3/10/2014

Testimony for PSM on Mar 13, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

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

Comments: Urge your support for HB2072

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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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 8:23 PM
To: PSMTestimony
Cc: greenlee@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2072 on Mar 13, 2014 14:45PM*

HB2072

Submitted on: 3/11/2014

Testimony for PSM on Mar 13, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

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

Comments:

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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