

# GM758

**Measure Title:** Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Council On Mental Health, Gubernatorial Nominee, CIARA KAHAHANE, for a term to expire 06-30-2020.

**Report Title:** State Council On Mental Health

**Description:**

**Companion:**

**Package:**

**Current Referral:** CPH

**Introducer(s):**



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony SUPPORTING GM758**  
**Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the State Council on Mental Health,**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, CIARA KAHAHANE, for terms to expire**  
**6-30-2020**

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH  
Hearing Date: April 13, 2016, 9:30 a.m. Room Number: 229

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the nomination and  
3 confirmation of Ciara Kahahane to State Council on Mental Health (SCMH) for her first term.  
4 She fills the consumer of mental health services segment of the council, pursuant to Chapter 334-  
5 10 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes.

6 Ms. Kahahane is currently a senior at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UH) and plans  
7 to graduate this summer. While excelling in her academic work, being on the Dean's List for  
8 the past 4-years, she is involved in many community activities. For example, once she became  
9 aware of how difficult it was to access mental health services and support groups on campus, she  
10 started the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Chapter at the peer-level to pave the way  
11 for individuals needing services. She has been involved with the NAMI Walk for the past two  
12 years, and is currently the co-chair for the Public Relations Committee for the 2016 NAMI Walk.

13 Ms. Kahahane is also involved with the NAMI Speaker's Bureau and often shares her  
14 individual journey with others. She noted that she is devoted to ending the stigma around mental  
15 illness and helping individuals and families affected by it. She is described by others as a person

1 who is organized, committed, and dependable; attributes that enable her to be a natural leader in  
2 her community on Maui and at the university.

3 We respectfully request your favorable consideration in confirming the appointment of  
4 Ms. Ciara Kahahane to participate on the SCMH.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Ms. Kahahane's behalf.

6 **Offered Amendments:** None.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

April 6, 2016

**PRESIDENT**

Mike Durant

To Whom It May Concern:

**VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Steven Katz  
Robert Collesano  
Dana Anderson

NAMI Hawaii is an affiliate of the largest grassroots mental health organization, National Alliance on Mental Illness; providing education, support and advocacy to those affected by mental illness.

**TREASURER**

Michael Williams, CPA

Ciara Kahahane has been a volunteer leader for NAMI Hawaii since 2014. She contacted us to start a chapter of NAMI on Campus, a college/university peer fun mental health organization on campus, that supports, raises awareness, and educates fellow students. In April 24, 2015, NAMI on Campus University of Hawaii at Manoa became an official campus club, approved by NAMI and NAMI Hawaii.

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Ciara has also assisted us with various outreach events and speaking engagements, promoting and bringing awareness to mental health. Ciara shares her story of living in recovery from depression and her success as a student, volunteer leader, and founder of NAMI on Campus UHM. She also assists NAMI Hawaii with public relations in social media, and is a valued chairperson for our NAMI Walks Hawaii 2016.

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Ciara is a very intelligent and motivated person. She goes above and beyond in all areas of her work. Her dedication to excellence and professionalism is matched with her compassion. I am very honored to work with Ciara and I highly recommend her to the State Council on Mental Health.

Mahalo,



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Kumi Macdonald

Kumi Macdonald  
Executive Director  
NAMI Hawaii



*Aloha United Way*

An Aloha United Way  
Partner Agency and Combined  
Federal Campaign Member  
Our AUW Designation  
Number is 96630

**From:** [Catherine Williams](#)  
**To:** [CPH Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Ciara Kahahane appointment to State Council on Mental Health  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 06, 2016 6:41:37 AM

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- Measures: GM757 and GM758.
- Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair.
- Wednesday, April 13, 2016, at 9:30am  
Conference Room 229  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street.

Dear Committee members,

I am writing in support of my niece, Ciara Kahahane, to be appointed to a seat on the State Council on Mental Health. I have watched with pride as Ciara has battled her own mental health issues by championing the rights of all people with mental illness. She has worked with National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa since 2014 and she plans to continue her contribution by helping plan NAMIWalks Hawaii 2016. I believe that Ciara's passion and experience as both an activist and a survivor would make her a powerful contributor to the State Council on Mental Health.

Sincerely,  
Catherine Williams

Catherine Williams  
1350 NW 19th St  
Corvallis OR 97330  
541-207-2179

**From:** [Dawn Webster](#)  
**To:** [baker4 - Haley](#)  
**Cc:** [CPH Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of Ciara Kahahane Measures: GM 757 and GM 758.  
**Date:** Thursday, April 07, 2016 9:48:21 PM

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Measures: [GM 757](#) and [GM 758](#). Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health  
Wednesday, April 13, 2016, at 9:30am

Dear Senator Baker and Senator Kidani,

I understand that Ciara Kahahane is being considered for a seat on the State Council on Mental Health and I am writing to support her nomination.

Ciara Kahahane was a student in two Honors courses I taught as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Hawaii, Manoa: Hons. 303- Civic Engagement and Issue Advocacy and Hons. 101 -Introduction to Research and Creative Work. Few students exemplified the spirit of those classes, and delivered to expectations the way Ciara did. I was delighted to find in Ciara an example of a student with a thirst for learning and a deeply grounded sense of who she is, and where she is headed. She understands the painful history of Hawai'i in ways that motivate her to want to make a meaningful contribution to improving its future.

From the outset I described Hons. 101 to the students as a class about "living the examined life." No student examined her life more rigorously than Ciara, and no student wrote about it more poignantly. I saw evidence of Ciara's leadership potential in the courage and matter-of-factness with which she disclosed her own mental health challenges to the class, and in her readiness to advocate for the student body to secure better services in this area.

She did not let her illness become an excuse for poor performance. She was decisive about getting help and getting back to good health. Her strong academic record speaks for the way she coped with her challenges.

I know she has been working in the field of mental health for a few years now, and it is one of her biggest passions. Her work with NAMI Hawai'i and NAMI On Campus at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa started in 2014, and will continue into the future as she helps to plan NAMIWalks Hawai'i 2016. She would bring to her seat on the Council her personal experience and an understanding of what it means to advocate for an issue.

In the Civic Engagement class, I invited the students to speak out and make their views felt and heard on the issues of the day. They were exposed to members of the press and given opportunities to participate in public demonstrations. The issues I exposed them to were contentious. There was some risk that their actions would incur the disapproval of their peers or friends and family.

Nevertheless Ciara was fearless and ready on every occasion to make the most of the opportunities presented to her. She made, and waved placards in public demonstrations on behalf of Gaza during the summer of 2014. These events sometimes drew negative reactions from passers-by. She was unfazed, and returned to continue demonstrating. She could have chosen not to demonstrate or she could have tried it once, and retreated. She did neither—to me, a mark of her maturity and political steadfastness. She understands, as she says herself so eloquently, that one must look to the past for guidance, but that it is in looking forward that she, and others, will prosper. This is a person who does not take refuge in millennial angst but converts her anger and concerns into action that is concrete and positive. Having heard her present in class, I know her to be both a poet and a pragmatist. She has declared her determination to offer leadership in addressing the many ills that so disproportionately afflict Native Hawaiians—and I fully expect her to deliver on her promise.

I offer my wholehearted support for her nomination to the State Council on Mental Health and believe she will make a real, substantive contribution.

Thank you for taking my testimony.

DAWN MORAIS Ph.D.

1, Keahole Place, #3501, Honolulu, HI 96825

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Blogs at <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/hawaii>

**From:** [Derek Fainberg](#)  
**To:** [CPH Testimony; baker4@capital.hawaii.gov](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony (Measures GM 757, GM 758, 4.13.2016 @ 9:30 AM)  
**Date:** Thursday, April 07, 2016 3:06:26 PM

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The following testimony relates to: Measures GM 757 and GM 758, Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health.

To be held on: Wednesday, April 13, 2016, at 9:30 AM.

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Ms. Kahahane has shown a tremendous amount of dedication and initiative in her tireless work on behalf of UH students struggling with mental illness. She has the capacity to effect great change and the fortitude to follow through on her commitments.

I believe she will continue to be a loyal and committed advocate for Mental Health in the state of Hawaii.

Sincerely,  
Derek Fainberg  
Life-long Resident of Hawaii and Business-Owner



**From:** [Patty Kahahane](#)  
**To:** [baker4 - Haley](#)  
**Subject:** Ciara Kahahane  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 12, 2016 8:59:46 AM

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Measures:GM757 and GM758  
Committee and Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Wednesday, April 13, 2016, at 9:30am  
Conference Room 229  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Mai,

My name is Patricia (Patty) Kahahane. I am Ciara Kahahane's mom. I am proud of all that Ciara has accomplished so far. I didn't recognize the symptoms of depression in my daughter but fortunately Ciara knew she needed some help. Her journey to get better has been a source of inspiration to me. She is focused on helping others realize they can get help and get better. Ciara is thoughtful, organized, energetic, and very intelligent. She would be an asset to this committee.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,

Patty Kahahane

Ciara Kahahane

- (1) Why do you want to be a member of the Board?

I have a passion for helping people. My college career has been a process of determining who to help, and in what way. Over the years, I have grown very concerned about the problem of mental health and mental illness in Hawai'i, and have been particularly involved in how it affects the state's young people. Becoming a member of this Board would allow me to continue advocating for the advancement of mental health in Hawai'i.

- (2) What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the Board?

- Meet on a regular basis
- Complete other duties and assignments outside of meeting time
- Advise on statewide/service-area mental health, needs, and allocation of resources
- Advocate for those with mental illnesses or emotional disturbances, including combined mental illness and substance abuse problems

- (3) In what ways do you feel that you can help protect the consumer?

As a young woman living in recovery from depression, I understand the difficulties that someone with a mental illness must endure. I believe that I can use my firsthand experience in dealing with these problems to anticipate the needs of the average consumer.

- (4) Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Board member, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise and knowledge that would aid you as a member of the Board.

I have experience working in mental health. I serve on the board of NAMI On Campus at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, which is affiliated with the National Alliance on Mental Illness and their Hawai'i state chapter, NAMI Hawai'i. I was a founding member of the UH Mānoa organization, and have also been working with NAMI Hawai'i since 2014.

- (5) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

I want to make it easier for an average resident of Hawai'i with a mental illness to receive the help that they need. I want to make private healthcare more accessible and public healthcare more effective.

- (6) Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will benefit the Board.

- Passionate. I am a passionate person with a drive to help people. This quality drives me to put forward my best work in the service of others and, if I become a member, in service to the Board.
- Devoted. Once I begin a project, I follow through with it. This devotion will ensure that my tenure on the Board starts and ends strongly, and that the work which I do is consistent as long as I am a member.
- Honest. I own my opinions whenever I voice them. I will take full responsibility for my words and actions, and will behave in a way that is true to my identity. My contributions to the Board will foster growth through discussion and unique perspectives.

(7) Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a Board member.

I have been a recipient of mental health services since 2013. For about a year, those services were provided by the Counseling and Student Development Center on campus, which relies on funding from the University of Hawai'i to operate. My experience – and difficulties – with the services there have had an important impact on me as an advocate for mental health. I believe that I can draw on this experience to identify problems in the mental healthcare system and to identify positive solutions.

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

I cannot foresee any potential conflicts of interest. However, if such an event should occur, I will give full disclosure of said conflict to the Board and prioritize morality, fairness, and good conscience in all of my actions.