

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2489
A BILL RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

PRESENTATION TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BY
MAJOR GENERAL ARTHUR J. LOGAN
ADJUTANT GENERAL
AND DIRECTOR OF THE HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
February 24, 2016

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

I am Major General Arthur J. Logan, State Adjutant General and the Director of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. I am testifying in **STRONG SUPPORT** of House Bill 2489.

This measure makes an appropriation to establish an additional veterans coordinator in the Office of Veterans Affairs. This new position will work to address the challenges of all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans.

The Office of Veterans Services (OVS) is the principal state office responsible for the development and management of policies and programs related to veterans, their dependents, and/or survivors. The OVS acts as a liaison between the Governor and veterans' organizations and also between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and individual veterans.

Their objectives are to assist veterans in obtaining State and federal entitlements, to supply the latest information on veterans' issues and to provide advice and support to veterans making the transition back into civilian life.

The Office of Veterans Services has increased their focus on women veterans because these veterans have many challenges including:

- Women veterans suffer higher rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The number of female veterans with PTSD will only increase after the recent Department of Defense decision to allow women to all combat related career fields.
- 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).

We need to address the needs of all our veterans and their families.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of House Bill 2489.

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2489, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE

PRESENTATION TO THE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BY

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

February 24, 2016

Good morning, Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto and members of the Committee:

I am Ron Han, Director of the Office of Veterans Services. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the concepts in House Bill 2489.

Funding for this position was submitted in the division's supplemental budget request but did not receive approval. If funding is not approved through this process, the State Office of Veterans Services may delay addressing women issues and programs.

The State Office of Veterans Services recognizes the strong need to develop programs and to address critical issues affecting this fastest growing group of veterans.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, February 16, 2016
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 309

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB2489 that appropriates funds for the establishment of a veterans' services counselor IV position within the Office of Veterans' Services to assist all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans.

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto and committee members,

I am Ann S. Freed Chair of The Hawaii Military Women's Task Sub-Committee (OVS). We are in strong support of this measure.

In addition to the testimony below previously submitted, please note that nearly 40 states have a designated women veterans' coordinator position. So there is ample precedent to fund this position.

Some History: The Sub-Committee takes its genesis from the Hawaii Military Women's Task Force 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 problems that our women face.**

We have subsequently reorganized as a Women Veteran's Subcommittee under the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). **This last November, we held the first State-Wide Women Veterans Conference.** We had about 150 participants and received valuable feed back on the needs and wants of our Hawaii women veterans. Two things stand out. Women Vets like their male counterparts, are unaware of many of their benefits and, women Vets also saw a need for more gender appropriate access to women's healthcare to include greater emphasis on wellness.

This counselor position would help to educate women as to their benefits, would coordinate women's healthcare services across the communities throughout our state, would assist in the creation and/or expansion gender appropriate services and assist in data collection of the number and needs of our women Vets.

We have asked that this be created as a full-time regular position for several years now. We are hoping that this years Legislature will address the ever-increasing scope of this need. As noted in the bill there are an estimated thirteen thousand women veterans in the state. As women come home from combat, retire from active duty, are medically discharged we can expect that problems specific to women, such as Military Sexual Trauma, re-entry issues, and access to gender-appropriate benefits, will only increase.

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. This position is an essential step in doing that.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify

Ann S. Freed

Chair, Women's Military Sub-Committee, Advisory Board of OVS

Office of Veteran's Services

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February 24, 2016

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 2489 Relating to the Department of Defense
Hearing: Wednesday, February 24, 2016, 2:00 p.m., Room 308

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of HB 2489 Relating to the Department of Defense which proposes that funding be made available to the State Department of Defense for a veteran's services counselor position within the Office of Veterans' Services (OVS) with a primary focus on female veterans.

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 Hawai'i 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 counselor 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.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2016 11:59 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: laurie.field@ppvnh.org
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2489 on Feb 24, 2016 14:00PM*

HB2489

Submitted on: 2/22/2016

Testimony for FIN on Feb 24, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laurie Field	Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii	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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THE SEX ABUSE TREATMENT CENTER



A Program of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children

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Michael P. Matsumoto

Robert H. Pantell, MD

Joshua A. Wisch

DATE: February 24, 2016

TO: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: The Sex Abuse Treatment Center
A Program of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children

RE: Testimony in Support of H.B. 2489
Relating to the Department of Defense

Good afternoon Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and members of the House Committee on Finance.

The Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC) supports H.B. 2489, which appropriates funds for the establishment of a veterans service counselor IV position within the Office of Veterans' Services to assist all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans.

Sexual assault in the armed forces remains a serious health and safety problem for both current and former service members in the State of Hawaii. As reported to the Legislature by the Hawaii Military Women's Taskforce (the Taskforce) in 2013, Military Sexual Trauma (MST) has lasting consequences for its survivors, and contributes to mental health problems, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, homelessness, and joblessness among our state's veteran population.

A recent national survey released by the US Department of Defense indicated that 26,000 service members were sexually assaulted in 2012. Of these, 12,000 (46%) were women, despite there being far fewer women in the military than men. This means that women in the armed forces are disproportionately subjected to sexual violence than their male counterparts, with 6.1% of the surveyed servicewomen responding that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact in 2012, compared with only 1.2 percent of men. Overall Veteran Affairs healthcare provider screenings further indicated that, in 2011, 23% of women veterans have experienced MST.

A Civil Beat analysis of incidents between 2004 and 2014 further found that an average of 119 sexual assaults of service members were reported in Hawaii each year. It is important to note that this does not reflect the actual number of military sexual assaults that likely occurred in the islands, as such attacks are vastly under reported.

The scale of MST in Hawaii, given the extent of the US military's presence in the islands, underscores the need for our state to provide appropriate resources to support veteran survivors of sexual assault, even after they leave service.

Unfortunately, an informal survey conducted by members of the Taskforce in 2014 found that Hawaii veterans still do not know what benefits they are entitled to or that services are available to address MST and PTSD, and continued to face difficulties accessing re-entry, employment and educational services and benefits.

By funding the veterans service counselor IV position in the Hawaii Department of Defense, H.B. 2489 would empower local veterans who suffered sexual assault during their time in service to access the resources they need to heal and recover, consistent with the Taskforce's recommendations to the Legislature. Moreover, the counselor would be able to identify and bridge gaps in care, and assist the Office of Veterans Services to improve MST service delivery throughout the State of Hawaii.

Therefore, we respectfully urge you to join SATC in supporting this important measure.

LATE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2489, HD1, RELATING TO VIETNAM WAR

COMMEMORATION

PRESENTATION TO THE

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BY Carswell J. Ross, Jr. CMSgt. USAF (Ret.)

Date of Hearing: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 @ 2:00 PM

Conference Room 308, State Capitol

Good afternoon Chair Luke and Vice Chari Nishimoto and members of the Committee on Finance, for this opportunity to **strongly support HB2489, HD1**. This bill will provide funds to establish a veteran's services counselor IV within the Office of Veterans Services (OVS), who will assist all veterans with special emphasis on assisting women veterans. Presently about 15% of our military members are female. They are now allowed to enter any job within the armed forces. Although this is a recent change to the law, women have been involved in areas close to the battle lines and in the present conflict with ISIS in direct contact with the enemy. Some have been wounded and some have been killed while participating in so called non-combat operations. Our society is ill-equipped to deal with trauma and there are special resources available to women who suffered injuries while in the service of our country. A counselor who is specially trained to deal with women issues is needed to effectively provide the support these female veterans require to reintegrate into society.

I thank the committee for allowing me this opportunity to testify in strong support of this bill.