

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 3113, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
DEFENSE

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BY

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

March 1, 2016

Good afternoon, Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Committee:

I am Ron Han, Director of the Office of Veterans Services. I appreciate this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the concepts in Senate Bill 3113.

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.



March 1, 2016

TO: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair and  
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair

RE: SB 3113 Relating to the Department of Defense  
Hearing: Tuesday, March 1, 2016, 1:00 p.m., Room 211

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of SB 3113 Relating to the Department of Defense 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 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 in support.

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**Cc:** [annsreed@gmail.com](mailto:annsreed@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB3113 on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM  
**Date:** Monday, February 29, 2016 2:23:05 PM

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**SB3113**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ann S Freed	Hawaii Women Veterans Sub Committee	Support	No

Comments: As in testimony of record from previous committees, the Hawaii Women Veterans sub-committee of the Office of Veterans Services is in strong support of this measure. With women veterans returning to Hawaii in record numbers, many with serious medical issues, there is a need for a position that will bring information and assistance to their specific sets of problems. Note that 41 states have designated a women veterans position in their state veterans offices. Mahalo for allowing me to testify, Ann S. Freed, Committee Chair

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**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB3113 on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM\*  
**Date:** Sunday, February 28, 2016 6:00:05 PM

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**SB3113**

Submitted on: 2/28/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Laurie Field	Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

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# THE SEX ABUSE TREATMENT CENTER

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

*Executive Director*  
Adriana Ramelli

*Advisory Board*

*President*  
Mimi Beams

*Vice President*  
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Joanne H. Arizumi

Mark J. Bennett

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Senator  
Suzanne Chun Oakland

Monica Cobb-Adams

Donne Dawson

Dennis Dunn

Councilmember  
Carol Fukunaga

David I. Haverly

Linda Jameson

Michael P. Matsumoto

Robert H. Pantell, MD

Joshua A. Wisch

DATE: March 1, 2016

TO: The Honorable Jill Tokuda, Chair  
The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

RE: Testimony in Support of S.B. 3113  
Relating to the Department of Defense

Good afternoon Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

The Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC) supports S.B. 3113, 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, S.B. 3113 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.

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**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB3113 on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM\*  
**Date:** Monday, February 29, 2016 11:13:11 AM

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**SB3113**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
James Terrell Trice	NuWayve Unlimited	Support	No

Comments:

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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 3113, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

PRESENTATION TO THE

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

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

Date of Hearing: Monday, February 16, 2016

Thank you Chair Tokuda and Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means, for this opportunity to **strongly support SB3113**. 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.

Attached is an article, Staradvertiser, dated February 24, 2016:





• **BRUCE ASATO / [BRUCEASATO@STARADVERTISER.COM](mailto:BRUCEASATO@STARADVERTISER.COM)**

**Female veterans are one of the fastest growing homeless populations the nation.**

Female veterans are one of the fastest growing homeless populations the nation, and state officials say it's no different in Hawaii.

But homelessness isn't the only issue female veterans are faced with, officials say. They also are confronted with high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, sexual assault and unemployment.

Hawaii lawmakers are pushing a bill to help provide more services to female veterans. The proposed law would create and fund a full-time counselor position in the Hawaii Office of Veterans Services with a focus on female veterans who served in active duty.

Hawaii Office of Veterans Services Director Ronald Han said he asked to fund this position in the division's supplemental budget request, but it wasn't approved.

Nationwide, over half of all female veterans receiving Department of Veteran Affairs health care have a disability or illness that occurred during service, according to the VA. Meanwhile, one in four women receiving VA health care — compared to one in 100 men — reported experiencing sexual assault or harassment during service, known as military assault trauma.

With the recent Department of Defense announcement to allow women in all front-line combat jobs, including infantry and special operations units, advocates say the need for services for female veterans will only grow. National data shows women are more likely to be raped by a male fellow soldier than killed in combat.

“They’re a growing minority,” said Ann Greenlee, Hawaii State Director for the Department of Labor’s Veterans Employment and Training Service. “I would hope that in 10 or 20 years, we wouldn’t need the position because women wouldn’t be considered a minority.”

Greenlee served on the Hawaii Military Women’s Task Force, which found in 2013 that military women in Hawaii are disproportionately affected by sexual assault, unemployment and challenges to access health care and child care. The counselor position would also help inform women of available services and stay on top of national policy changes, she said.

“We found that, in general, female veterans were much less aware of their benefits and services available to them and much less likely to consider themselves eligible for those services,” Greenlee said.

Supporters of the bill say addressing female veterans’ issues in Hawaii is especially important because of the state’s large military population. Every branch of the military is located on the island of Oahu, which is also the headquarters of the United States Pacific Command.

Female veterans make up nearly 15 percent of the United States Armed Forces, and are expected to make up 10 percent of the veteran population by 2020. Nearly 13,000 female veterans live in Hawaii.

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**SB3113**

Submitted on: 2/27/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
ronald wright	Individual	Support	No

Comments: This needs to happen

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