

HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 HONOLULU, HI 96813 · PHONE: 586-8636 FAX: 586-8655 TDD: 568-8692

March 28, 2017
Rm. 016, 9:30 a.m.

To: The Honorable Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

From: William Hoshijo, Executive Director
Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

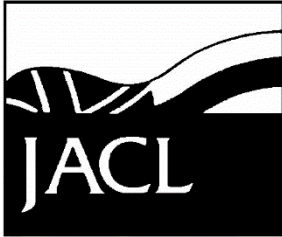
Re: G.M. No. 559

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai‘i’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5.

G.M. No. 559 submits the nomination of Liann Ebesugawa to the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission, for Senate consideration and confirmation.

The statutory qualifications for HCRC Commissioners are laid out in HRS § 368-2(a): “The members appointed to the commission shall be selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience in civil rights matters and on the basis of a demonstrated commitment to the preservation of the civil rights of all individuals.”

HCRC staff are appreciative of the willingness of Joan Lewis to serve as an HCRC Commissioner. Ms. Ebesugawa brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the Commission, and an impressive record of demonstrated commitment to civil rights for Hawai‘i’s people. She has an impressive history of work in law, business, government service, and civil rights advocacy. Since her appointment, she has been conscientious and engaged while serving pending confirmation.



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

HONOLULU CHAPTER

P.O. BOX 1291, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96807

EMAIL: jaclhon@gmail.com WEBSITE: www.jaclhonolulu.org

Working For A Greater America

March 27, 2017

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To: Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
Honorable Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

From: Alison Kunishige
President, Japanese American Citizens League – Honolulu Chapter

Re: SUPPORT OF GM559 Hawaii Civil Rights Commission, Gubernatorial
Nominee, LIANN EBESUGAWA

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee:

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) Honolulu Chapter is in strong support of Liann Ebesugawa's nomination to the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission (HCRC).

Founded in 1929, JACL is the nation's oldest and largest Asian Pacific American civil rights organization. Locally our organization works to protect the civil and human rights of all. This work includes Native Hawaiian self-determination, protection of immigrant rights and protection of COFA migrant health care.

Ms. Ebesugawa currently serves on the board of the JACL-Honolulu Chapter and served as our Chapter's past president. During her time as board president she provided balanced and strong leadership in addressing complex issues related to marriage equality, homelessness, Native Hawaiian self-determination, and many other civil rights issues facing our community. Ms. Ebesugawa would bring an unmatched intellect and distinct capacity to understand civil rights from the perspectives of the state, advocate, and private sector to the HCRC. JACL-Honolulu has the utmost confidence in her ability to serve effectively on the HCRC.

JACL-Honolulu strongly supports Ms. Liann Ebesugawa's nomination to the HCRC and respectfully urges the Committee to approve her nomination.

SanHi Government Strategies

a limited liability law partnership

Gary M. Slovin
Mihoko E. Ito
R. Brian Tsujimura

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governmentaffairs@awlaw.com

gslovin@awlaw.com
mito@awlaw.com
rtsujimura@awlaw.com

DATE: March 25, 2017

TO: Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran
Chair, Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Submitted Via Capitol Website

RE: **GM 559 – Confirmation to the Civil Rights Commission, Gubernatorial
Nominee, Liann Ebesugawa**
Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room: 016

Dear Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor:

I am Gary Slovin and I submit this testimony in **strong support** of the nomination of Liann Ebesugawa to the Civil Rights Commission. I have known Liann for more than ten years, have worked with her closely, have come to know her well and feel she is one of the finest persons I have ever worked with or known. Her sense of caring and her sense of justice cannot be measured by normal means. There is no meanness in her, only a spirit of enormous generosity. I would trust Liann with any position, but she is certainly well suited to being a member of the Civil Rights Commission.

I first came to know Liann when she was an associate at the firm of Goodwill Anderson Quinn & Stifel. She was an outstanding associate, beloved by her peers. Soon after she joined the firm, I became the Managing Partner of the firm. That responsibility called for being able to go to trusted persons for advice and insights. Even though Liann was one of the youngest persons in the firm at that time, she was one of my 'go-to' people because I knew Liann's advice would never be biased by what was good for her but would only be based on what she thought was best for everyone else. If I was ever frustrated by her it was only because of my inability to get her to think about what was good for her.

Gary M. Slovin
Mihoko E. Ito
R. Brian Tsujimura
C. Mike Kido
Tiffany N. Yajima
Matthew W. Tsujimura

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Liann is intelligent and diligent; you know she will always give her best. She is oriented to finding solutions, not blame. She treats everyone, and I really mean everyone, with dignity and respect. When you discuss a matter with her, you know you have her full attention. Her personality is all one could hope for in a friend, a daughter, etc. But it is her extraordinary character that sets her apart. If she sounds too good to be true, one need only ask anyone who has known her.

For all of the foregoing reasons, and many more I could cite, I strongly support the nomination of Liann Ebesugawa to the Civil Rights Commission

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DATE: March 27, 2017

TO: Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran
Chair, Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Submitted Via Capitol Website

RE: **GM 559 – Confirmation to the Civil Rights Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, Liann Ebesugawa**
Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room: 016

Dear Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor:

I am Mihoko Ito and I submit this testimony in **strong support** of the nomination of Liann Ebesugawa to the Civil Rights Commission.

I am proud to be able to call Liann a friend and trusted professional colleague for the last 15 years. Liann and I worked for the same firm during our second year of law school, and for about 5 years after we graduated and started our legal careers. During this time, we spent a lot of time together as associates. We now serve on a non-profit board together. I have known and observed her over the years as a corporate lawyer, executive director of the Hawaii State Board of Education, executive at Atlas Insurance, and now as an attorney at Hawaiian Electric.

Liann has always been a leader. She is extremely smart and capable, a great listener, and fully engaged and diligent in any project she undertakes. For the non-profit board we serve on together, she provides valuable insights in our board discussions based upon her years of legal and professional experience. As colleagues, I have always known Liann as someone I could confide in and seek good advice from. She is also truly one of the nicest people I have ever met - I do not know anyone who could ever say anything negative about Liann.

Gary M. Slovin
Mihoko E. Ito
R. Brian Tsujimura
C. Mike Kido
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Matthew W. Tsujimura

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As a past president of JACL Honolulu, an organization committed to protecting civil rights, Liann is the perfect candidate to serve on the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission. The Commission will be very fortunate to have such a qualified person serve in this capacity.

I give Liann my highest recommendation to this position, without any reservations.

Dina Shek
Honolulu, HI 96816

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2017

**RE: Support for Nomination of Liann Ebesugawa
to the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (GM 559)**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to support the nomination of Ms. Liann Ebesugawa to the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission. As demonstrated through her work with the Japanese American Citizens League (Honolulu Chapter), she has a strong history of leadership and commitment to civil rights. I have had the privilege of working with Ms. Ebesugawa on several projects addressing equal rights and dignity for Micronesian and immigrant communities in Hawai'i. She always brings a thoughtful and diligent approach, bridging critical inquiry and analysis with the lived realities of those affected by the lack of civil rights protections. This is true not only for ethnic and immigrant communities, but also for LGBTQ, Muslim, and others targeted for unequal treatment.

For these reasons, Ms. Ebesugawa is an excellent candidate to serve as a member of this important Commission. Please vote to CONFIRM Ms. Liann Ebesugawa's nomination to the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission.

Thank you for your consideration,



Dina Shek

March 26, 2017

Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senator Gilbert S. C. Keith-Aragan, Chair
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Hearing: Tuesday, March 28, 2017
9:30am
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

Re: Letter of Support for Civil Rights Commission Gubernatorial Nominee GM 559
Liann Ebesugawa

Dear Committee on Judiciary and Labor:

I write to strongly encourage your confirmation of Liann Ebesugawa for the Hawai`i Civil Rights Commission. Ms. Ebesugawa is a dedicated public servant, has been actively involved in civil rights and social justice issues, is exceedingly intelligent and knowledgeable about Hawai`i issues of law and justice and is insightful, thoughtful and collegial. She will be a substantial contributor to the important work of the Civil Rights Commission.

I write as the Fred T. Korematsu Professor of Law and Social Justice at the William S. Richardson School of Law (I am writing on my own behalf). My areas of specialty include civil rights and human rights. I teach and write in the field of social justice.

I first got to know Ms. Ebesugawa when she was a University of Hawai`i graduate student researching and writing about race and ethnicity in Hawai`i. Her concerns and insights, along with her analytical rigor and her passion for contributing to a better Hawai`i, impressed me. I, and others, encouraged her to acquire legal training as part of the next steps in her professional development.

At the law school, Ms. Ebesugawa was an outstanding student in my year-long Civil Procedure course for first-year students as well as a top student in my upper level Racial Justice and Complex Litigation seminars. Because of her intellect and work ethic and her interest in social justice issues, I asked to her serve as my research assistant and to become a Scholar Advocate (part of a special training program I'd been developing for students with commitments to justice work). Her truly outstanding work led me to collaborate with her as co-authors on a major chapter on redress for the World War II Japanese American Internment in the seminal international reparations handbook in 2006. Our jointly authored chapter is still cited regularly.

After her graduation, Ms. Ebesugawa clerked for a progressive Supreme Court Justice, Simeon Acoba, who was known for his careful opinions on issues of civil rights and criminal justice. During her clerkship and her subsequent work with a major downtown law firm and then the Island Insurance Company we kept in regular touch. I

know that her decision later to work for the Board of Education stemmed fully from her desire to make a meaningful contribution to steps forward on perhaps the most thorny and pressing local issue in Hawai'i: public school education.

I also have seen Ms. Ebesugawa actualizing her concern for social justice through her long-standing grass-roots and leadership work with the Japanese American Citizens League – Honolulu. The JACL Honolulu is considered the most active and forward-thinking of all the JACL chapters across the nation. It has been a leader in support of Native Hawaiian self-determination, same gender marriage, Micronesian medical care, Kamehameha Schools admissions and fair treatment of Muslims in America, among other things. Ms. Ebesugawa has been deeply involved in organizing, analyzing, collaborating, communicating and advocating on these issues – all in a powerful yet very grounded and balanced way. And as she became a key part of the leadership of the Honolulu chapter, I saw her emerge as a genuine leader and contributor – always insightful, collaborative and committed to thoughtful action. And a tireless worker.

Through my interactions with Ms. Ebesugawa, and particularly through her leadership, the JACL Honolulu chapter has become a friend of the court in numerous amicus briefs to the Hawai'i Federal District Court, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court. It has also co-authored op-ed essays to the newspapers and been a sponsor a many public educational forums of civil and human rights issues – the most recent last month on the 75th anniversary commemoration of the Japanese American Internment spotlighting present-day issues of “National Security and Democratic Liberties”.

For all of these reasons, Ms. Ebesugawa is ideally suited to serve on the Civil Rights Commission. Her intellect, commitment to justice work, scholarship, organizing skills and vision, thoughtful advocacy, diverse work experiences in the private and public sectors and her collegial approach to problem solving will make her a significant contributor to the Commission's important work.

Sincerely,

/s/

Eric K. Yamamoto
Fred T. Korematsu Professor of Law and Social Justice
William S. Richardson School of Law

March 28, 2017

To: Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
Honorable Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

From: Jacce S. Mikulanec

Re: SUPPORT OF GM559 Hawaii Civil Rights Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, LIANN EBESUGAWA

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of GM559, recommending Liann Ebesugawa be confirmed to served on the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission (HCRC).

I have had the privilege and pleasure of serving alongside Ms. Ebesugawa on the Japanese American Citizens League-Honolulu (JACL) for the past six years. During this period, both as a fellow board member and during her term as president, I experienced and benefited from Liann's capacity to effectively lead her fellow board members and the broader community through some of the most turbulent and challenging civil rights issues facing our state.

In particular, Liann has the distinct ability to not only lead on complex civil rights issues but, she is also able to listen and build consensus where consensus does not initially exist. In our work together on the JACL board I frequently experienced Liann's capacity to broaden her fellow board members' understanding of an issue from a uniquely civil rights perspective; for example, on the issue of homelessness/houselessness.

I was personally impressed with Liann's leadership of JACL during the successful effort to pass Hawaii's marriage equality legislation. While JACL has a long history of supporting marriage equality, Liann was especially committed to making sure that JACL was at the forefront when it came to supporting the passage of SB1. She worked to leverage JACL's resources to support the local grassroots campaign and personally made the marriage equality issue a top priority for our Chapter. As a spokesperson for JACL, Liann effectively and insightfully made the clear link between marriage equality and the fight for justice and equality that Japanese- Americans sought in the wake of Executive Order 9066 and internment.

She is one of the most dedicated and professionally exacting individuals I have ever had the privilege to work alongside of. Her understanding of the struggles facing many of Hawaii's minority communities is impressive and sincere.

Ms. Ebesugawa would be a valuable addition to the HCRC. I encourage the Committee to support her nomination.

Thank you for allowing me to offer this testimony.

Respectfully,
Jacce S. Mikulanec

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc:
Subject: Submitted testimony for GM559 on Mar 28, 2017 09:30AM
Date: Monday, March 27, 2017 9:42:54 AM

GM559

Submitted on: 3/27/2017

Testimony for JDL on Mar 28, 2017 09:30AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ryan Sanada	Individual	Support	No

Comments: My name is Ryan Sanada and I am a labor and employment attorney in Honolulu, Hawaii. I've been licensed to practice law in Hawaii since 2000. I am currently the Director of Legal Affairs for the Hawaii Employers Council, where I assist Hawaii employers with labor and employment compliance matters on a daily basis. I was formerly in private practice for 10 years, during which time I represented numerous companies before the HCRC. I strongly support Ms. Ebesugawa's nomination to serve on the Civil Rights Commission. Ms. Ebesugawa possesses all the necessary attributes for this position: she is intelligent, thoughtful, and hard working. In addition, her professional experience in both the private and public sector - where she has worked as an employment law attorney, and is currently the Executive Director for the BOE - makes her uniquely qualified to work with the Civil Rights Commission. This was a great pick by Governor Ige. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this nomination.

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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