



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 04, 2019

TO: The Honorable Representative Russel E. Ruderman  
House Committee on Health

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director  
Maureen Bates, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

SUBJECT: **GM 731– RELATING TO NOMINEE FOR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

Hearing: Friday, April 5, 2019, 2:45 p.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the nomination of Mr. Rene Berthiaume to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Mr. Berthiaume is seeking an appointment for his third term on the SRC. He is looking to assume the SRC member role representing business, industry, and labor.

Mr. Berthiaume is currently a private consultant, with over 30 years of experience advocating for parity in Hawaii's workforce for individuals with disabilities. Prior to his retirement, Mr. Berthiaume was the Vice President at Network Enterprises Inc. (NEI), a community rehabilitation program here in Honolulu. Mr. Berthiaume was involved with NEI contracts with State, Federal, and County government. He has been and continues to be involved in addressing the housing needs of Hawaii's vulnerable citizens; previously he worked in NEI's housing program and served as a board member of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

Mr. Berthiaume's commitment and wealth of experience are invaluable to the work of the SRC in its advocacy and shared vision to build workforce parity in Hawaii to improve the lives of persons with disabilities and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to this committee.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



CAROLINE CADIRAO  
PSM MANAGER

BRUCE S. ANDERSON, Ph.D.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

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**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM 731**  
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council,**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, RENE BERTHIAUME, for a term to expire 06-30-2021**

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
SENATOR RUSSELL E. RUDERMAN, CHAIR  
SENATOR KARL RHOADS, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Debbie Shimizu  
Program Specialist, Executive Office on Aging  
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: Friday, April 5, 2019  
2:45 pm

Room Number: 016

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department  
2 of Health, is in strong support of the nomination of Mr. Rene Berthiaume to the State  
3 Rehabilitation Council.

4 **Comments:** Mr. Berthiaume has a long history of working with Hawaii's non-profit agencies in  
5 housing, construction and developing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities  
6 and veterans. He is currently providing professional services in human services, housing, special  
7 needs housing and construction.

8 Mr. Berthiaume is also a member of the Executive Office on Aging's Advisory Committee for the  
9 No Wrong Door Initiative. This is a federal initiative funded by the Administration for  
10 Community Living to coordinate and streamline referrals between state agencies. Mr. Berthiaume  
11 has been an active participant on the Advisory Committee representing the State Rehabilitation

12 Council and provided valuable insight on developing the No Wrong Door system in the state to  
13 better serve our kupuna and individuals with disabilities. With his knowledge and experience  
14 working with non-profits, individuals with disabilities, veterans and employment, he has been a  
15 valuable asset to the Executive Office on Aging. I am confident he will also be a valuable asset to  
16 the State Rehabilitation Council.

17 For these reasons, EOA supports the confirmation of Mr. Rene Berthiaume to the State  
18 Rehabilitation Council.

19

20 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**George S. Massengale**  
**4300 Waialae Avenue, Apt. A803**  
**Honolulu, HI 96816**

April 4, 2019

To: COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Hearing: GM731 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Rene Berthiaume

Date: April 5, 2019 – Room 016

**Testimony in Support**

Chair, Senator Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and members of the Committee on Human Services. I am honored to offer this testimony in strong support of my very close friend and colleague Rene Berthiaume.

Rene and I have been very close friends for over four and half decades. We first met in 1974 at the University of San Francisco where we were both enrolled in the graduate program in Rehabilitation Administration. At that time, he was special education teacher at Hawaii Association of Retarded (HARC) at the Fort Ruger Center, and I was the Operations Director for Goodwill Industries which was located Hotel Street just behind Straub Clinic and Hospital.

I would like to share story with committee about a project we did in 1976. As graduate program assignment we were asked to develop collaborative project between our two organizations. At that time HARC had a composting project as part of their gardening skill class where his student were learning how to use basic gardening tools; shovels, spades, hoe's, and leaf & thatching rakes, hedge & grass shears, weed whackers and wheelbarrows. At Goodwill we needed a steady source of compost for our home lawn maintenance crews to top-dress lawns for lawn rejuvenation. What was not used by the lawn crews for sold at our Goodwill stores.

Because of the quality of lawn work by Goodwill crew's the organization was swamped with lawn work request. This in allowed Rene to triple the size of his composting project. At the same time our stores were seeing an ever increasing, demand for bags of compost. Needless to say, this was very successful venture for both organizations.

Over the years I have come to appreciate Rene's entrepreneurial knack of merging work opportunities with client skills. Given the new requirements place on DVR as part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Rene's knowledge, skills and guidance will surely be needed as more DVR clients transition into mainstream employment.

Please confirm Mr. Berthiaume's appointment to the Hawaii State Rehabilitation Council.

Warmly,



George S. Massengale

