



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
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May 12, 2020

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection,
and Health
Thirtieth Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Baker and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: GM 594 – State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Gubernatorial Nominee Verna Waikiki

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS GM 594** to confirm the nomination of Verna Waikiki for a term to expire June 30, 2021.

The Council's Federal mandate (P.L.106-402 - DD Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000) is clear in determining the composition of this body to ensure that all the stakeholders are represented and engaged in the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of services and supports for individuals with DD.

The law specifically requires that not less than 60 percent of the membership of the Council be comprised of individuals with DD, parents, immediate relatives or guardians. Additionally, each Council shall include representatives of relevant State entities, including State entities that administer funds provided under Federal laws related to individuals with disabilities, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 701 et seq.); Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.); Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.); and Titles V and XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 701 et seq. and 1396 et seq.); Centers for Excellence in DD Education, Research, and Service; State Protection and Advocacy system; and representatives, at all times, of local and non-governmental agencies, and private nonprofit groups concerned with services for individuals with DD in the State.

The Governor's nominee meets all the Federal requirements for Council membership. Ms. Waikiki's appointment to the Council would fulfill the Federal requirement for a representative of the State Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system. HDRC is the Council's sister agency as both entities fall under P.L. 106-402.

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Both agencies have distinct roles under the federal law, the Council responsible for systems advocacy, and HDRC responsible for protecting the legal and human rights of individuals with DD. As an advocate with the Hawaii Disabilities Rights Center (HDRC), the State's P&A System for people with disabilities, she would assist the Council in its 2017-2021 State Plan activities to advocate for community integration, inclusion and independence, and promote access to services for individuals with DD.

The Council is pleased with Ms. Waikiki's nomination to serve on the Council and looks forward to her contributions to improve access and availability of services for individuals with DD.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for **GM 594** to confirm Verna Waikiki to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Sincerely,



Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



HAWAII DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER

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May 7, 2020

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Committee on Commerce Consumer Protection and Health

Dear Senator Baker:

The Hawaii Disability Rights Center is proud to submit this testimony in strong support of the Governor's Message relating to the nomination of Verna Waikiki for a term on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Verna has spent her entire career serving the disability community. Following her distinguished time as an educator and speech therapist, she joined the Hawaii Disability Rights Center nearly twenty years ago. She is one of our finest advocates and has developed a tremendous amount of expertise in many facets of the disability rights field.

Verna is very bright and is one of the hardest working, most dedicated individuals I have had the pleasure to work with in my capacity here at the Center. She frequently volunteers for extra assignments and renders sought-after advice to many others in the office. She has a caring and compassionate nature, which when combined with her tireless willingness to work, makes her an extremely effective advocate.

I can assure you that she will bring this same spirit to her role as a member of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. As the Committee Chair can appreciate, it is not always easy to recruit volunteer members for Boards of this nature. Verna, however, specifically expressed her interest in this undertaking. For that, we are grateful. She will be a credit to the Council and a very worthy member and we are pleased to offer our utmost support for her nomination.

Sincerely,

Louis Erteschik
Executive Director



I am happy to support the appointment of Mrs.Verna Waikiki to the Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Council for the 2020-2021 term. I have worked with Ms.Waikiki as a colleague, a trainee, a co-presenter and an advocate, and I believe her to be an outstanding professional in the field. Her long career speaks for itself, with her encyclopedic knowledge and enormous skills background. Nevertheless, her real strength lies in her personal character her and tireless commitment.

I have never worked with someone so determined to solve a problem or get to the bottom of an issue. Once Verna sees a need or a conflict, she doesn't rest until she uncovers its source and tries to find a remedy. She is fearless in her honesty and perseverance, which is a rare and underappreciated virtue. She follows through on each commitment and remembers every client. Somehow, she manages to do it all with a sense of humanity and humor that can only come from a sincere desire to help bring dignity to persons of all abilities.

My work with Verna has been mostly on Maui, and I've been impressed that she is so widely recognized for her expertise here that many people are surprised to learn that she is actually based on Oahu. in addition to being a tremendous resource, I have also found her to be a valued team member when cooperating with other organizations. I believe that Verna Waikiki would be an excellent addition to the DD Council.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Rucci
Member, Maui Disability Alliance

Questionnaire Response

Submitted by nominee Verna Q.L. Waikiki

to

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

It has been my pleasure to be given the opportunity to become a member of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities Board.

Question 1 Why do you want to be a member of the Board.

Answer: The Mission and Vision statements of the DD Council are in keeping with my life long career choices and beliefs.

Question 2 What do you perceive are roles and responsibilities of a member of the Board?

Answer: To engage in interagency collaboration to build capacity and systematic change activities consistent with best practices and federal law.

Question 3 In what ways do you feel that you can help protect the consumer?

Answer: My personal commitment to improving the lives of persons with disabilities and working knowledge of the laws that support and protect consumers.

Question 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.

Answer: My career spans more than 30 plus years of providing direct services and advocating for children and adults with disabilities. I have both a degree in education and speech pathology, administrative experience in the implementation of 5 year Federal grant targeting children with mental health issues, sat on community boards and promoted interagency collaboration to ensure coordinated plan development for the consumer in his/her home-community-school environments (Circle of Care).

Question 5 What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

Answer: Share my knowledge and expertise with law makers, agencies and families; further policy changes that support inclusion of consumers in all facets of life system; and continue to provide positive contributions to benefit the State of Hawaii.

Question 6 **Name three qualities that best describe you how these qualities will benefit the Board.**

Answer: 1-.Honest

2-Good collaborative skills to achieve positive outcomes

3- Personal employment commitment to persons with disabilities

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

Answer: Involved in problem solving event with multiple private and public agencies regarding a consumer with complex medical, intellectual and mental health challenges. The complexity of the consumer's situation demanded an understanding of agency service guidelines/limitations, respecting and including the consumer's cultural and personal wishes, and ensuring the outcome would allow for safe reentry into his home and community. Outcome: Wraparound services were provided to consumer allowing for him to engage in employment and live independently.

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

Answer: None come to mind at this time.