



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LT. GOVERNOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: 586-2850
Fax Number: 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

CATHERINE P. AWAKUNI COLÓN
DIRECTOR

JO ANN M. UCHIDA TAKEUCHI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
Wednesday, May 13, 2020
9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**On the following measure:
G.M. 684, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY,
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES SPIRA,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2022**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Catherine Awakuni Colón, and I am the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (Department). The Department supports the confirmation of Dr. James Spira's appointment to the Board of Psychology (Board) as a licensee member.

Dr. Spira has nearly 40 years of experience in the field of psychology. As a licensed psychologist in Hawaii, he is currently the director for Pacific Behavioral Health. Dr. Spira previously taught at the University of Hawaii School of Medicine. He spent a significant portion of his career in California, and his professional work has also taken him to North Carolina.

Dr. Spira has extensive experience serving on various panels and boards, including as president for both the American Academy of Clinical Health Psychology and, more recently, the Hawaii Psychological Association. He appreciates and understands the commitment necessary to prepare for and attend the Board's monthly meetings.

The Department believes that Dr. Spira's lengthy professional experience, both locally and on the mainland, will offer an invaluable perspective to the Board. In addition, his desire to serve on the Board and commitment to actively participate in board meetings will greatly enhance the Board's effectiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

From: [Tanya Gamby](#)
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Subject: Dr Jim Spira Board of Psychology Nomination
Date: Saturday, May 9, 2020 2:35:46 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing a strong letter of support for Dr. Spira's nomination to the Board of Psychology. For over 10 years I have worked closely with Dr. Spira on the board of the Hawaii Psychological Association. I have also had the privilege of attending a number of Dr. Spira's trainings.

Dr. Spira is extremely professional and knowledgeable and works well in groups and as a leader. My numerous interactions with Dr. Spira have been only positive and it is without reservations that I recommend him to the Board of Psychology position.

Aloha,
Tanya Gamby, PhD
Past President Hawai'i Psychological Association

Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

In Support of Dr. James Spira for Confirmation to the Board of Psychology (GM684)

May 13, 2020, 9:30AM, Room 229

My name is Raymond A. Folen. I am a clinical psychologist by training and served as a U.S. Army civil service employee for 32 years, the latter part as Chief of the Department of Psychology at Tripler Army Medical Center. Since 2016, I have served as the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Psychological Association. My observations and comments about Dr. James Spira are based on my work with him as a colleague over the last two decades.

Dr. Spira is an extraordinary psychologist, a leader in our field. He is nationally known for his work in health and forensic psychology and he served as Chair of the NATO Wounds of War Committee on Evidence-based Treatments for PTSD. He is the author of 90+ professional articles and book chapters and has presented over 90 times at state, national and international meetings and conferences. Dr. Spira has taught at Stanford University, Duke University, the University of California and in post-graduate seminars throughout the US, Europe and Asia over the last 35 years. In Hawai'i, Dr. Spira is known as an exceptional teacher and mentor. He served admirably as President of the Hawai'i Psychological Association in 2017.

Dr. Spira has my strongest endorsement for appointment as a member of the Board of Psychology. He epitomizes the highest standards of practice and professionalism in our field. His approach to complex problems is one that consistently reveals both intelligence and wisdom and he is recognized by his colleagues for these qualities and for his dedication to the mental health needs of our community. I most highly recommend Dr. Spira for appointment to the Board of Psychology.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond A. Folen, Ph.D., ABPP
Licensed Psychologist

From: James L Spira PhD, MPH, ABPP
Nominee, Board of Psychology 2020-2022 term

(1) Why do you want to be a member of the Board?

I have been a public servant for most of my career, finding value in serving the public interest. Since retiring from Federal Service in 2015, I have attempted to serve in various volunteer positions, and look forward to serving both the State of Hawaii, the Psychology community, and the public in this capacity.

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

First and foremost, I believe the responsibility of a Board member will be to insure the public safety, and to establish and enforce appropriate standards for the Practice of Psychology in the State of Hawaii.

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

I believe that the Board of Psychology is essential to help interpret the laws of the State of Hawaii regarding the practice of Psychology, and to advise the legislature as to the impact of policies and regulations being considered for implementation. I believe it is also important to help establish and help enforce standards of practice for psychologists.

(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.

I have been a licensed psychologist for 25 years, in three States, and served in both academic and clinical positions in Universities, Federal and State government roles, and in private practice in the community. I am committed to the practice of psychology in Hawaii, having served as Professor, Department of Psychiatry in the John Burns School of Medicine, President for the Hawaii Psychological Association, Director of the Pacific Island Division of the Department of Veteran's Affairs National Center for PTSD conducting clinical research on veterans and their families in the Pacific region. I have served as a subject matter expert for the Hawaii Office of the Attorney General, Public Defender's Office, and District Attorney's Office. Therefore, I believe I have a range of experience in the practice of psychology and commitment to the community that will help me to be of service to the Board of Psychology.

(5) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?
I hope to serve in the capacity of a Board member to the best of my ability, and to bring perspective from my experiences from having practiced in other states, and from the perspectives of someone who has practiced in a variety of settings, including as a clinical psychologist in the community, served the courts and prison systems, and practiced in academic, state, and federal settings.

(6) Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will benefit the Board.

1) I enjoy findings ways to collaborate with others to find practical solutions to complex problems. Since many of the problems addressed by the Board are complex affecting consumers, practitioners, and the law, all these factors must be considered when looking for workable solutions to issues before the Board.

2) I am a collaborator. Although I can work independently to come up with potential solutions, I value collaborating with others to find the best solutions to a given situation that represents a workable consensus approach. Working together toward workable solutions with the entire Board and legislature is imperative if the Practice of Psychology is to be successfully implemented in the State.

3) Tempered Idealism: I am optimistic about the future of mental health care in the State of Hawai'i and want to be a part of the growth of the care psychologists can offer to those in need of mental health services. Yet I appreciate that what seems like an optimal course forward needs to be tempered by realistic factors that are required to implement these practices and policies in a way that protects the consumers and is consistent with the laws of the State.

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

Having worked in the Federal system for many years, I have had a great deal of experience implementing clinical care policies through collaboration with all levels of government to make sure the policies were consistent with laws and regulations.

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

I foresee no conflict of interest arising during my service on the Board. The only potential conflict may arise from my membership (no longer leadership) in the Hawaii Psychological Association if the HPA advocates for a policy that may be in conflict with Board recommendations. In this case, I would

use my position on the Board to explain Board positions so that HPA could attempt to come into compliance with Board policy.