

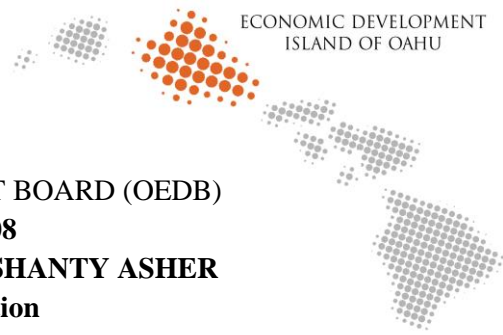
My name is Amy Agbayani, Chair Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights (HFCR). HFCR is dedicated to justice, equality and civil rights for all. We are in strong support of Shanty Asher to the Board of Education (GM708)

For over four decades I worked on education and higher education issues relating to equal access, student diversity and inclusion. I have had many opportunities to discuss and work with Shanty Asher on community and public school issues relating to language access, discrimination, immigration, multicultural and bilingual education. I first met Ms. Asher a few years ago when she testified at hearings of the State Advisory Committee to the US Civil Rights Commission. I was a member of the Commission which completed a report on barriers facing Micronesians, one of the most vulnerable and fastest growing ethnic groups in the state. I continue to be grateful to Ms. Asher for her knowledge of best practices and concerns facing Pacific Island students in her professional work at PREL as well as her work as a Micronesian community leader. I am confident Ms Asher will contribute to the Board of Education in making education policy decision that will improve the educational experience of all students and be a strong voice for students from various cultures and are native speakers of languages other than English.

As a community civil rights advocate and retired University of Hawaii administrator of student service diversity programs (serving Native Hawaiians, Filipino and other underrepresented groups, women, LGBT students, child care and students with disabilities), I appreciate the challenges facing the Board of Education public and their responsibility for equal access, non-discrimination and inclusion. I am very impressed with Ms. Asher's academic training, integrity, subject matter knowledge and ability to work with diverse individuals and groups. Ms. Asher understands and can contribute to policies relating to teacher training, curriculum, community and parent involvement. She is an experienced education researcher, community leader and advocate. She is intelligent, pays attention to detail, reads extensively, listens carefully and asks questions carefully before making any decision. She is committed to excellence and equity in our public schools.

HFCR thanks Ms. Asher for her consistent support for social justice, equal access to quality education, community and parent engagement. We are confident she will be a responsible, active contributing member of the Board of Education. We strongly endorse Shanty Asher (GM708).

Amy Agbayani, Chair Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights
3432 B-1 Kalihi St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Amy_agbayani@yahoo.com



Testimony of the
OAHU ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD (OEDB)
In Support of GM 708
Relating to Gubernatorial Nominee SHANTY ASHER
to the Board of Education

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Thursday, May 14, 2020
1:00pm
Conference Room 229
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Committee Members,

Please accept this letter of support for the confirmation hearing for Shanty Asher for the Board of Education.

I have not known Shanty but about a year and time is no measure when I meet someone and thru observations and engagement know who she is.

About 10 years ago I asked a public health nurse with the Department of Health to assist me in finding some leaders in the Micronesian Community whom I could meet with. The reason for the request was the troubling reports and stories I was receiving regarding the Micronesian community in health, safety, education, and cultural incongruency to the "local culture."

The nurse helped me to find 6 men originally from Chuuk who were willing to meet with me on a couple of conditions. All of these men were considered Pastors so they were spiritual leaders of their families. There conditions were:

- 1) What do you want, everyone wants something from us?
- 2) We don't represent the Micronesian Community there is no 1 Micronesian Community, we represent our families, do you understand?

I gratefully said that I want to meet to ask a simple question and yes, I simply want to meet with folks who I can ask the question to.

I waited at a McDonald's at 6 pm when the 6 men walked in carrying a sack of burgers and super-sized drinks. The oldest was 67 the youngest was probably in his late 20's. I asked them all to introduce themselves so they did and then explained why I needed to meet with them. I shared that a friend produced a 5-minute video of homeless



people on the Leeward Coast of Oahu and it was so beautiful to see how a service provider was doing amazing work and how grateful those being served were with food, education, and most of all love. I explained that about 70% of the faces in the video were Micronesian and that's what moved me to request a meeting.

I shared that as I watched that beautiful video I saw another video in my mind's eye of atomic bombs being dropped in Micronesia and it caused a revelation that the detonated bomb image caused the effects of the homelessness video. I explained that when the United States tested the bombs in their waters and islands we really blew everything up and since we blew it up now we needed to fix it so we had to throw things at the problems or deficits we created. Money, food, healthcare, religion, free flowing US passage, etc.

"What I wanted to ask you men is since the USA virtually blew your lives up this is who you've become, what I want to know is who were you before we blew you up? Because who I see, I don't think that's who you were but because of the detonations and reparations this is who you've become, so who are you?"

The oldest many immediately started sobbing and the others stoically sat in silence. I asked what they used to eat and they said "we ate banana, sweet potato, taro, breadfruit, and pandanus!"

I said "Sounds healthy". To which one replied enthusiastically "we were, we were strong and healthy!"

For the next hour I shared stories and perspectives that I felt would affirm the brilliance of their heritage misplaced in the recent history of trauma caused by the USA. I shared the gratitude many of us with Hawaiian ancestry have for the people of Micronesian holding the key to unlock the door to the lost knowledge of celestial and ocean wayfaring because of Mau Piailug. To which one man said "we used to know the name of every star in the heavens today I can probably name you 3, do you think your people can teach us the names of the stars again?"

It is amazing that many people conclude that the people of Micronesian didn't want to learn and yet in a short meeting of connection (not correction) a powerful and poignant request to learn was declared.

When I asked the question "who were you?" I didn't ask because I wanted an answer, I asked because I knew the answer and I felt they needed to find and realize the answer. The answer was, they were of the strongest, healthiest, most resilient, innovative, industrious, clean, and brilliant people on the planet. Others are trying to fix and change them instead of help them to recover who they were and truly are.

The reason why this is pertinent to Shanty's appointment and role as a BOE Member is that she exudes the qualities of brilliance and connection (revealed in my question) not only needed for our Micronesian cousins but needed for all children of Hawaii. From Kosrae she has endured prejudice and self-doubt to raise herself with grit, tears, and smiles to be a wise, thoughtful, and well spoken leader. I applaud Governor Ige's selection and full heartily ask that you affirm her confirmation to the Board of Education.

She has the credentials but so do many others. She has the discipline to speak thoughtfully to silence the competing noises so we can be people of reflection, courage, empathy, and action.

Mahalo nui loa,



Pono Shim
President & CEO



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidsCAN.org
hawaiikidsCAN.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

May 14, 2020

Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN would like to provide comments on GM 708, which submits for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Education (BOE), gubernatorial nominee, Shanty Asher, for a term to expire 06-30-2023.

We want to extend our gratitude to the committee for taking the time to address this important position. Our current COVID-19 health crisis has highlighted the critical role our public education system plays in our communities, from social-emotional supports to the distribution of food and digital devices.

We are also grateful to Ms. Asher for her willingness to serve on the BOE and support Hawaii's diverse learners. Her experience working with diverse Pacific Islander communities as part of Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) brings an important perspective to the BOE.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We strongly believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances. Part of our kuleana is to serve as a resource for policymakers, including the BOE and legislature, as you work to build a better future for all kids. We look forward to getting to know Ms. Asher and helping to share guidance we receive from students, parents, and educators on the challenges and opportunities facing our schools.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN





An Affiliate of
National Justice
for Our Neighbors

May 13, 2020

Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
The Senate
Thirtieth Legislature, Regular Session 2020

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Re: **GM 708: Confirmation of Shanty Sigrah Asher to the Board of Education**

Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to provide this letter in support of the nomination of Ms. Shanty Sigrah Asher to the Board of Education. Ms. Asher and I work together as fellow directors on the board of The Legal Clinic (“TLC”) here in Honolulu. I currently serve as the president of the board.

TLC is a non-profit organization that provides legal, advocacy, education and related services to Hawai‘i’s low-income immigrant community. We provide direct legal services through our staff attorney and trained paraprofessionals. We also provide legal services through numerous community workshops. For instance, we help immigrants go through the difficult naturalization process to become U.S. citizens, and we assisted others obtain necessary governmental documents. (We continue to provide these services individually, over the internet where possible, during the Covid-19 shutdown.) Our advocacy work includes meeting with community groups to work on solutions to common problems facing our low-income immigrants and seeking to implement them. And, our education efforts include appearing on several radio programs; speaking at churches and high schools; participating in articles for the print media; disseminating information guides and other efforts.

Ms. Asher is an active member of the board of directors of TLC. The board is a particularly diverse one, consisting of a “Dreamer” under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (“DACA”) program; two members of the Muslim community, including the Imam of the Muslim Association of Hawai‘i; two Methodist pastors, one of whom is a Tongan radio show host; the former Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Diversity at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa – a Filipina long-time activist for immigrants and civil rights in Hawai‘i and others.

Ms. Asher adds to the diversity of our board. As you likely have seen from her resume, she was raised in Kosrae, one of four states that comprise the Federated States of Micronesia (“FSM”), having graduated from high school there. She went on to obtain her bachelor’s and master’s degrees here in Hawai’i. She returned to FSM, and has served in both the FSM’s Department of Foreign Affairs (as a Deputy Assistant Secretary) and the Department of Justice (as a legal specialist). In her various positions, she has had the opportunity to serve various officials in a wide-array of public policy issues, including with respect to regional compacts with area governments, including with Australia and New Zealand. She also has experience advising on anti-corruption and security related issues. Shanty currently serves as an education law specialist with Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (“PREL”) here in Honolulu. PREL has staff throughout the Pacific and collaborates with schools, agencies, and communities to transform schooling and promote dynamic reciprocal learning communities built on strong social and cultural capital.

Shanty is an integral part of our board. As a community leader from one of the nations that make up the Compacts of Free Association (“COFA”), she has brought needed perspective and knowledge to our board about an important part of our community, too often overlooked. She is also hard working and is quick to respond to emerging issues in the immigrant community. For instance, when members of the COFA community were recently prevented from applying online for unemployment insurance because of a bureaucratic glitch in the application form, she was key in bringing together a number of community groups that helped solve that particular problem.

Just as Shanty has brought her knowledge, perspective, community awareness, and hard work to TLC, I am sure that she would do the same for the Board of Education. We commend Ms. Asher to you and believe that she would serve ably as a member of the Board of Education.

Thank you.

Yours Truly,



Corey Y.S. Park
President
Board of Directors
The Legal Clinic

GM-708

Submitted on: 5/13/2020 12:59:49 PM

Testimony for EDU on 5/14/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Agnes Malate	Testifying for Filipinos for Affirmative Action	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Mercado Kim, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

I am writing in wholehearted support of Shanty Sigrah Asher's nomination to the Board of Education. I am a member of the Filipinos for Affirmative Action and a Faculty Specialist at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). It has been an honor to serve with Ms. Asher on the board of The Legal Clinic over the past year. As the Education and Law Specialist for the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), she has the knowledge and experience to bring a fresh perspective to the BOE and offer her insight to ensure that all of Hawai'i's students receive a quality education.

Ms. Asher is well-respected by the COFA communities and the broader community for her expertise and equally so by the care and compassion she extends in serving others. She is humble yet is steadfast in pursuing solutions that will advance and benefit the most vulnerable populations. I admire her tenacity and leadership and appreciate your full consideration of her nominations.

Respectfully,

Agnes Malate

GM-708

Submitted on: 5/12/2020 1:51:11 PM

Testimony for EDU on 5/14/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Healthy Pacific	Testifying for HealthyPacific.Net	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

HealthyPacific.Net offers its **STRONG SUPPORT** of the nomination of Shanty Sigrah Asher to the Hawai'i Board of Education.

Ms. Asher is an attorney with an extensive record of public and community service, including, most recently, helping many of her community members navigate and understand the unique challenges they face with unemployment and other benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her recent and longstanding efforts in the service of others demonstrate the diligence and effort she will invest in furthering the Board of Education's critical work. Moreover, her commitment to justice and access to justice for all of Hawai'i's community members - including Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders who continue to see disparate outcomes in our public education system - will also be invaluable to helping the Board of Education better meets its mission for all of Hawai'i's keiki. Finally, Ms. Asher's legal acumen and expertise will no doubt also be of great service to the Board of Education generally, enabling it to make informed and thoughtful decisions that can best benefit our educational system and the children and communities it serves.

HealthyPacific.Net is fully confident that Ms. Asher will be an invaluable addition to Board of Education and respectfully but strongly urges that the Committee **CONFIRM** her appointment to the Board.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify,

The HealthyPacific.Net Team

Dr. Vidalino S. Raatior | Raatior Consulting | vidraatior@gmail.com | raatior.com

TO: Senator Michelle N. Kidani
Chair, Senate Committee on Education

RE: GM 708 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Education, Gubernatorial Nominee, SHANTY ASHER, for a term to expire 06-30-2023.

DATE: May 9, 2020

It is an honor for me to write this testimonial to **strongly recommend** the confirmation of Shanty Asher to the Board of Education per "GM 708 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Education, Gubernatorial Nominee, SHANTY ASHER, for a term to expire 06-30-2023."

My testimonial is grounded in my experience having had the privilege of serving as Director of the Pacific Islander Student Center at University of Hawaii at Hilo, co-founder of We Are Oceania (WAO), founder of the Pacific Leadership Assistance Network (PLAN), co-founder of the Pacific Focus Education (PacificFocused) initiative, and having served as a consultant to a number of nonprofit organizations in Hawaii including the Micronesians United - Big Island (MU-BI), Pacific Resources for Education & Learning (PREL), and others.

I have followed Mrs. Asher's career as a strong advocate for the Micronesian community in Hawaii both through her work in the legal arena as well as in education through the Pacific Resources for Education & Learning (PREL). Her strong voice for social justice coupled with her passion for supporting the success of the Micronesian community in Hawaii will provide the much needed advocate the Micronesian children and parents need on the highest level of policy-making and oversight on the Board of Education.

Like many of us, Shanty approaches the advocacy work in Hawaii inspired by the late Dr. Joakim Peter, another strong Micronesian educator and social justice advocate who was nominated and confirmed to serve on the Civil Rights Commission. His untimely passing was a tremendous loss for bridging the Micronesian community with the local community and government. Shanty will fill that chasm with competence, compassion, conscientiousness, and a determination for seeking the betterment of all children with strong affinity for the underserved Micronesian community. Our community needs such a strong woman to serve in this important role. She's already a role model to many youth today; her appointment and with your help to confirm her will be a tremendous model for the Micronesian children in Hawaii's public school system.

Mahalo nui! Killisou Chapur! Kulo! Kammagar! Mesulang! Kommol tata! Kalahngan! Si Yu'us Ma'asel.

GM-708

Submitted on: 5/12/2020 1:53:43 PM

Testimony for EDU on 5/14/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wayne	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of Ms. Shanty Asher's nomination to the Board of Education.

GM-708

Submitted on: 5/12/2020 5:34:57 PM

Testimony for EDU on 5/14/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Paul Hadik	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I have known Ms. Shanty Asher since she was a High School student in Kosrae, one of the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia. I have watched her grow academically, making the leap from a small Pacific Island to working for the FSM National Government, going to California to successfully complete Law School to becoming a valued employee at the non-profit I oversee, PREL.

Ms. Asher is a leader in the COFA community. She has been an advocate for COFA parents and students since moving back to Hawaii. She has her own children in the Hawaii public school system. I have no doubt that Ms. Asher will be a valuable addition to the BOE and will become a much needed voice for the growing population of COFA students in our system

GM-708

Submitted on: 5/13/2020 1:07:12 PM

Testimony for EDU on 5/14/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ivan Blanco	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hafa Adai Chairwoman Kidani and members of the Education Committee:

I write in full support of Governor Ige's nomination for Ms. Shanty Asher to serve as a member of the Board of Education. When I learned of her nomination, I immediately offered to send this testimony in full support because she has a big heart to help her community, the underserved and the under represented. Her impeccable integrity and brilliance will be an asset to the education body.

I can assure you, without reservations, that she will carry out her duties faithfully to the benefit of the students. I respectfully seek your favorable consideration for her confirmation.

Respectfully,

Ivan A. Blanco

Saipan, CNMI

(670) 285-8768

GM-708

Submitted on: 5/13/2020 9:19:47 PM

Testimony for EDU on 5/14/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sheldon Riklon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado-Kim, and Members of the Committee on Education,

As a former resident of the state of Hawaii and fellow Micronesian advocate, I write in **strong support** of the nomination of Shanty Asher to the Board of Education.

Ms. Asher as an well-educated active Micronesian advocate and mother is an optimal nominee to the Hawaii Board of Education. Her work in the community has been of vital in providing for our Micronesian community especially as it relates to education for our students as evidenced by her work as an educational law specialist with the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) in Honolulu.

Her experience as a Micronesian role model and active community advocate in addressing culture, assimilation, and support for our many Micronesian students in the Hawaii Schools is vital in reaching our Micronesians students and providing support to their teachers as part of the board of education's mandate to formulate statewide educational policy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support of the nomination of Shanty Asher to the Board of Education.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheldon Riklon, MD

GM-708

Submitted on: 5/11/2020 10:34:30 AM

Testimony for EDU on 5/14/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dina Shek	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Ms. Shanty Asher is a dynamic community leader, a parent, and an advocate for children and families in Hawai'i. She is a highly-regarded interpreter, not only of Kosraean language and Micronesian culture, but also an interpreter of legal knowledge, governmental systems, and educational access. Ms. Asher is a thoughtful and respected advocate for Micronesian families. The Board of Education will benefit greatly from her expertise on behalf of all students and families in Hawai'i.

GM-708

Submitted on: 5/11/2020 9:06:30 PM

Testimony for EDU on 5/14/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Roman Leverenz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Mercado Kim, and Members

I am in writing to support the nomination of Shanty Asher to the Board of Education.

I have known Ms. Asher for a little less than a year. I recommended that The Legal Clinic consider her to be a member of our Board. (The Legal Clinic offers free or low-cost legal advice and representation to low-income immigrants and their families.) She was approved unanimously and with enthusiasm.

I believe it would be hard to find a more committed, engaged, and informed individual when it comes to the issues that Micronesians find in our public school system. She has been nothing less than a most positive force and strong voice on our Board at The Legal Clinic. If selected, I am sure that your board will find her contributions and spirit to be invaluable.

Sincerely,

Roman Leverenz