



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
1010 Richards Street, Room 217  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

May 12, 2020

TO: The Honorable Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Maureen Bates, Administrator  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

SUBJECT: **GM 725 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Walter Soares, for a term to expire 06-30-2022**

Hearing: Thursday, May 14, 2020, 3:00pm  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

The Department of Human Services, on behalf of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), supports the confirmation of Mr. Walter "Wally" Soares to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The SRC was established in the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The SRC acts in partnership with the DVR on services that address employment needs of individuals with disabilities.

Mr. Soares is seeking appointment to the SRC as a representative for the Disability Advocacy Groups representing a cross section of individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities, and parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves per section 348-8(a)(6), Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Mr. Soares is a person with a disability that satisfies the SRC requirement of at least 50% of its members to have a disability. Mr. Soares is employed as a small business owner and president of Island Skill Gathering that provides assistive technology, independent living skills, vocational counseling, and disability awareness/ADA training. Mr. Soares's knowledge of assistive technology that can assist an individual with a disability accomplish almost any job task and his advocacy on behalf of individuals with disabilities will be a benefit for the State Rehabilitation Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.