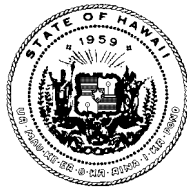


LATE

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 17, 2021

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director
Maureen Bates, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

SUBJECT: **GM 558** – Relating to consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Victoria (“Vickie”) Reiko Kennedy, for a term to expire 06-30-2023.

Hearing: Thursday, February 18, 2021, 3:00pm
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Department of Human Services (DHS), supports the nomination and confirmation of Ms. Vickie Kennedy to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

PURPOSE: The SRC was established by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The SRC acts in partnership with the DVR on services that address employment needs of individuals with disabilities.

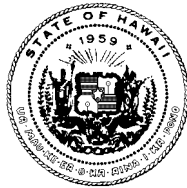
Ms. Kennedy is seeking appointment to the SRC as a representative for the Disability Advocacy Groups representing a cross section of individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities, and parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of individuals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

Ms. Kennedy is a person with a disability thus satisfying the requirement of section 348-8(a) that “a majority of the council members shall be persons who have disabilities and are not employed by the vocational rehabilitation division of the department.” Ms. Kennedy dedicated more than 30 years towards advocacy for individuals who are blind/visually impaired. Ms. Kennedy’s first-hand experiences with blindness, educating the public on individuals who are blind/visually impaired, and her work for the legitimacy of service animals equips her with the type of knowledge which will make her an asset as a member of the SRC.

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

LATE

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GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
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STATE OF HAWAII
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to this committee.



February 16, 2021

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 213
Honolulu, HI 96813
sensanbuenaventura@capitol.hawaii.gov | cc j.honda@capitol.hawaii.gov

Re: Victoria Kennedy (Nominee to the State Rehabilitation Council)

Dear Senator Buenaventura,

It is with great pleasure to write this letter of reference for Victoria Kennedy (Vickie), as nominee to the State Rehabilitation Council. I have known and worked with Vickie for 4 years now and she has dedicated many years to our City's Parks and Recreation Department, specifically our senior club program at Asing Community Park. Vickie served as the Ewa Hui Senior Club President for close to 4 years and managed over 115 members, aged 55 and up. In addition, she planned and promoted the majority of annual programs, outings, speakers and other events for her senior club. She has a strong sense for delegating work where needed and was able to pull from the strengths of her board. Since I have known her, Vickie has always had a deep concern for our senior community, and has worked tirelessly to bring in as many reputable speakers to address various issues that our seniors face today. Some focused issues have included age-related risks, disabilities and other senior vulnerabilities. Vickie has been a great asset and advocate for our senior community and as long as I have known her, she has been active in many organizations such as Guide Dogs for the Blind and Hawaii Fi-Do.

Without a doubt, I believe Victoria Kennedy would be an excellent member on the State Rehabilitation Council.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Candy M Ford Sakata".

Candy M Ford Sakata
Recreation Director III
Asing Community Park
City & County of Honolulu
Department of Parks and Recreation
91-1450 Renton Rd
Ewa Beach HI 96706
808-768-6769



HAWAII FI-DO SERVICE DOGS

Unleashing Potential

2-12-21

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Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 213
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator San Buenaventura,

As the Program Director and Founder of Hawaii Fi-Do Service Dogs, I've worked closely with Vickie Kennedy during the past six years. She created and chaired our big annual "Dining With Dogs" fundraiser, which also had as a major goal, educational outreach. The events have been immensely successful.

STAFF

Matthew Lorin
Executive Director

Susan Luehrs
Program Director

PO Box 757
Kahuku, HI 96731
Tel: 808-638-0200
Info@hawaiifido.org
www.hawaiifido.org

Mrs. Kennedy is committed to, and well connected with those with service animals. In 2018, when the State Legislature was considering passing a law against "Fake Service Dogs," Vickie was instrumental in pulling together most all of the guide dog teams here on Oahu, encouraging them to submit supportive testimony to the Judiciary Committees. That bill became law effective January 1, 2019.

Over the years Vickie has become more than a resource, an experienced guide dog handler and a volunteer but also as a friend that I could count on in a variety of situations. Vickie is totally committed to helping those with disabilities and has years of excellent experience to share with others. It is my honor to recommend her as a member of our State Rehabilitation Council.

Aloha,

Susan Luehrs
Founder, Program Director
Hawaii FiDo Service Dogs



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MĀNOA

Feb. 15, 2021

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 213
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: In Support of GM 558, for Victoria Kennedy

Dear State Rehabilitation Council Committee members:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Victoria Kennedy, a leading advocate in Hawaii for people who are blind or visually impaired. I understand she has been nominated by the governor to be a member of the State Rehabilitation Council. That is a very wise choice, and I support her nomination whole-heartedly.

Her resume speaks for itself, but from my perspective, I also have worked closely with Victoria during the past few years on an international research project, founded at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, that is breaking much new ground around the world in the field of media accessibility. In short, this project, the UniDescription Project (www.unidescription.org) helps public places, such as U.S. National Park Service sites, become more accessible through Audio Description. Audio Description is the remediation of visual media into audible media, primarily for the benefit of people who are blind or low-vision.

For Vickie's part, she has been involved in multiple field experiments with me and two major international workshops, called "Descriptathons," serving as a team member with national parks, as a judge of Audio Description, and as an expert audience member of Audio Description.

During these workshops, we help to train professional interpreters around the U.S. and Canada to create better Audio Description, and they also create audio products during these events that are shared with the general public. In short, Vickie has helped these collaborators to learn about Audio Description, to practice Audio Description, and to produce Audio Description for the general public at some of the highest levels of public discourse (shared at both U.S. National Park Service and Parks Canada sites).

Throughout my interactions with her, Vickie has proven to be extremely engaged in the world, especially about learning how to better describe imagery for public audiences. In these settings, she consistently displayed kindness for others, a rigorous pursuit of her work, a multicultural sensibility to her environment, and a strong ethical backbone.

So, in short, her potential to do even more public good is very high, and I'm hopeful this position will help her to continue to advocate for people who need more-accessible media to participate in everyday government activities, a taken-for-granted sort of access that needs dire attention in the state of Hawaii. In short, I believe she would be an excellent member of the State Rehabilitation Council.

If I can answer any further questions about her or her application, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration!

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brett Oppegaard".

Brett Oppegaard, PhD, Associate Professor of Communication
University of Hawaii, brett.oppegaard@hawaii.edu / 360-521-8150 (c)

2550 Campus Road, Crawford Hall 320, Honolulu, HI 96822-2217
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