

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

Testimony of James S. Tabe,
State Public Defender

Senate Committee on Judiciary

February 5, 2021

JC10: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit, Judicial Nominee, James R. Rouse

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee:

I fully support the confirmation of James R. Rouse, Judicial Nominee, to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit.

I have known Mr. Rouse since 1996 when he joined the Office of the Public Defender. Even though he was always assigned to the Maui Branch, I was privileged to get to know Mr. Rouse very well over the years through the week-long Annual Public Defender Advocacy Seminar. And because I was in the Appellate Division for almost twenty years, Mr. Rouse and I had many discussions over the phone regarding his cases.

Regrettably, I never had the opportunity to observe Mr. Rouse display his skills and talent in the courtroom. I was, however, fortunate to observe his litigation skills at the annual seminars. The Public Defender seminar is divided into two components: a mock trial portion, which allows the deputy public defenders to develop and sharpen their trial skills, and a lecture portion. During the mock trial portion, deputy public defenders participate in courtroom exercises, such as opening statements, cross-examination and closing arguments. Every year, Mr. Rouse approached each exercise as if he was actually in a courtroom and defending a real person. He took the mock trial portion very seriously; he was always well-prepared, as he truly appreciated the value of the exercises. At the close of each exercise, he was often praised by the faculty for his skills. And because of his humility, he was always receptive to constructive criticism. Mr. Rouse was also a model student during the lecture portion of the seminar. You always found Mr. Rouse sitting in the front of the lecture room; he was always engaged and attentive.

Mr. Rouse is highly qualified to serve on the family district court bench. He holds himself to high standards of preparation and performance. He not only has the intellect and knowledge to grasp complex legal issues, but he also possesses a strong work ethic, good common sense, and the ability to articulate and explain his position in a thoughtful, thorough, and intelligent manner.

Because district family court judges preside over people dealing with very personal family matters on a daily basis, the judicial applicant must have the judicial temperament, demeanor, and character to be successful. I know that Mr. Rouse will treat each individual -- including attorneys, litigants, and witnesses -- with dignity, patience, respect, and compassion. Indeed, many of the family court participants (i.e., spouses appearing for divorce proceedings, hopeful parents appearing for adoption proceedings, parents/guardians and children appearing before Child Protective Service hearings, minors and parents appearing before juvenile delinquent hearings) -- are unfamiliar with and are intimidated by the judicial system. Mr. Rouse, with his "down-to-earth" personality, will put them at ease. And he will be such a positive influence on the children and teenagers who appear before him in juvenile delinquency proceedings. I am certain he will help and inspire the juveniles with his enthusiasm and positive energy.

As long as I have known Mr. Rouse, he has practiced law with competence, zealousness, compassion, integrity, and humility. He has demonstrated that he possesses the ability, the experience, and the qualities to be a district family court judge. Mr. Rouse will certainly be an asset to the judiciary, and I am proud to support her for a seat on the bench.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in this matter.

Sincerely,

James S. Tabe

JC-10

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 2:30:37 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Cain	Testifying for Law Offices of Cain and Herren	Support	No

Comments:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to support the nomination of James Rouse for Judge.

I have known and worked with Jim for over 15 years. He has a very broad range of civil, criminal and family law experience. I've always found Jim to be fair and honest. I feel as a judge he would make good decisions. Above all, Jim Rouse has heart!

As a member of the maui county bar I strongly urge the committee to vote yes on Jim becoming our much needed new family court judge.

Thank you.

David W. Cain



Friends

of the Children's
Justice Center of Maui

1773-A Wili Pa Loop Wailuku, HI 96793

Phone: (808) 986-8634 • Fax: (808) 244-2943

Email: paul@mauicjc.org • Website: www.mauicjc.org

To whom it may concern,

My name is Paul Tonnessen. I am the Executive Director for the Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui. This letter is written as public comment in support of the appointment of James (Jim) Rouse for a judgeship for District Court and District Family Court in the Second Circuit, Island of Maui. I have had the privilege of knowing Jim for over nine years, both as a friend, a stellar attorney and an advocate for the children of abuse and neglect in Maui County. Jim brings the right mix of humility, diligence, and intelligence during his proceedings in the courtroom. He has always been a fierce advocate for the children of abuse and neglect that I serve. In turn, I know that he will be a perfect fair and balanced judge, something that is definitely necessary for our judicial system. Jim is also well known as a relentless seeker of facts. As a child advocate, I truly appreciate his compassionate and empathetic approach towards our most vulnerable children caught up in the system due to no fault of their own. Jim always seeks to ensure that whoever he is representing that they are represented in a fair and balanced way. The judiciary should be non-political; open to new arguments, but driven by historical precedents. I strongly believe that Jim will not be the dreaded activist judge. This can only be done if the law is applied fairly and accurately which is exactly how I feel Jim will be. The fact that Jim has been considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee, shows how respected he is in his work and his community. Jim is also a dedicated family man with a strong sense of community. I hope it is obvious that I hold Jim in the highest of regards. I would be proud to see his appointment to the District Court and District Family Court in the Second Circuit. I feel that he will bring an experience level that few of the other candidates can rival as well as the right temperament for the appointment.

Mahalo, *Paul Tonnessen*

Paul Tonnessen
Executive Director
Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui
paul@mauicjc.org
808-463-4636

*Please feel free to reach out to me if I can be of anymore assistance for Jim's consideration.

Benjamin E. Lowenthal
Attorney at Law
81 N. Market Street
Wailuku, Maui, Hawai'i 96793

February 1, 2021

Chair Karl Rhodes
Vice-Chair Jarrett Keohokalole
Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Appointment of James R. Rouse, Esq. to Family Court

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

I write in strong support of James Rouse's appointment to be Maui's next Family Court judge. I have known Mr. Rouse for most of my life. I met him in high school when he was a public defender.

When I moved to that office, Mr. Rouse went to the Office of the Attorney General. We not only have a warm professional relationship, but we are great friends. Mr. Rouse has always put his clients first. As a public defender that meant zealous advocacy in the courtroom. As a deputy attorney general, Mr. Rouse appears in the Family Court often times ensuring that the most vulnerable people in our society—children, victims of abuse, and those with severe and debilitating mental illness—are safe. I have no doubt that Mr. Rouse will uphold the integrity of our justice system. His intelligence, experience, and compassion for those who find themselves in the often emotionally-charged and difficult family court arena make him an ideal Family Court judge.

Mahalo for taking the time to read this letter.

Very truly yours,

/s/Benjamin Lowenthal

Benjamin E. Lowenthal

JC-10

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 2:52:00 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Pullman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am pleased to write in support of this promising nominee. I have had several in depth legal discussions with Mr. Rouse and find him to be highly intelligent with very sophisticated legal analyses and a thoughtful outlook on the court system. I believe Mr. Rouse is of the judicial calibre that the Hawaiian Courts should be aiming for. I respectfully urge you to confirm his nomination. Mahalo!

JC-10

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 3:27:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
wendy hudson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha - I was Jim Rouse's supervisor at the Public Defender's office. He always came in early and was prepared for his day. He really cared about his clients and was a strong advocate for them. He has a big heart and is full of compassion. I currently practice with him in Family Court for Involuntary Commitment hearings. He's now been a Deputy Attorney General for some time and understands a whole other area of Family law, separate and beyond domestic violence, juvenile cases, TRO's and divorce. He certainly knows all of the subject areas of Family Court. He has a big personality with a great sense of humor and is quite comfortable in the courtroom. I believe he could be fair to all sides and that even the divorce bar would appreciate his savoir faire while on the bench. He's an avid worldwide concert goer, but doesn't do anything that would be embarrassing. He's honest, extremely humble, does good work with integrity, and would be an asset to the Bench.

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary
Senate of the State of Hawai'i

Lance D. Collins, Ph.D
Law Office of Lance D. Collins

Friday, February 5, 2021
Support for JC 10, Confirmation of James Rouse
to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit

I write in support of the confirmation of Mr. James Rouse to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit.

I have known Mr. Rouse for 17 years and believe he has all of the qualities necessary to serve in judicial office including integrity, legal ability, experience, intelligence, compassion, diligence and judicial temperament.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 10:10:51 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| William Sloper      | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

I have been working as an attorney on Maui since 1997 in both private and government service. I have had the pleasure of working against James Rouse in countless cases over the last 20 years, including one full year in the Criminal Family Court Abuse Calendar. Mr. Rouse is uniquely qualified as a Family Court Judge as he has worked in the Family Court system from all sides. Mr. Rouse will be a great asset to the community of Maui as a Family Court Judge. There is no doubt that he will treat all who come before him with dignity, grace and fairness.



Peter A. Horovitz  
2073 Wells Street, Suite 101  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793  
Phone 808.242.5700  
Fax 808.442.1255  
pah@mhmaui.com

February 2, 2021

Via Electronic Submission

Hawaii State Senate Committee on Judiciary

Hon. Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 204

Hon. Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 231

RE: JC9; Christopher M. Dunn  
JC10; James R. Rouse

Dear Messrs. Rhoads and Keohokalole :

I write in strong support of the nominations of Christopher M. Dunn and James R. Rouse to positions as judges of the District Court and District Family Court of the Second Circuit. Both are excellent attorneys, and while I will miss being able to interact with them as counsel on various matters, they will each make excellent judges. As a practicing attorney on Maui for the past 19 years, I am particularly pleased that these positions are being filled by members of the Maui Bar. They each know our community, and I am confident they will serve it well for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Peter A. Horovitz

Cody Minatodani  
Attorney at Law  
P.O. Box 3234  
Wailuku, HI 96793  
codyminatodani@hotmail.com  
(808) 298-7921

February 2, 2021

The Honorable Karl Rhoads  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
State of Hawai'i Legislature  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Hearing on February 5, 2021; JC 10; James R. Rouse

Dear Senator Rhoads:

I have known James R. Rouse for the past 20 years as a colleague and as a friend. Mr. Rouse and I were opponents in Family Criminal Court. He was the Deputy Public Defender and I was the Deputy Prosecuting Attorney. He was zealous in his representation of his clients but remained fair and professional. We went to trial against each other and, also, resolved cases in a fair manner.

Mr. Rouse has been appointed to serve as a District / Family Court judge in the Second Circuit. I have practiced for several years in the District and Family Courts of the Second Circuit. Mr. Rouse understands people and is intelligent, compassionate, and practical. I believe that Mr. Rouse can effectively handle the volume of litigants and cases that enter those courtrooms. I believe that he will be able to quickly determine and prioritize the most important aspects about each case.

As an attorney, I value Mr. Rouse's opinion. He would be an asset to Hawai'i's Judiciary and I respectfully ask that the Senate confirm the appointment of James R. Rouse.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Cody Minatodani

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 2:32:35 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Graciela Dyangko    | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of Judicial Nominee, James R. Rouse for consideration and confirmation to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Jim for two years on a professional level, working with him during my time as an investigator for Child Welfare Services on Maui, and on a personal level; I consider him to be a mentor. I am grateful for his guidance and support through the professional and life experiences and lessons that he shares.

Jim expertly balances intelligence, professionalism and expertise in law with warmth, humility and integrity. I have observed how he does his very best to make situations a win-win for all. He is one of the most honest and genuine people I have met. Jim is firmly committed to fairness, and understands the intricacies of life which lends to his great compassion for others. I believe these traits are invaluable for a judge in Family Court.

With his pragmatic style, down-to-earth demeanor and sense of humor, I believe that children and families in his Court will feel respected, heard and understood. Jim will be able to connect with, rather than alienate the families during what could be overwhelming court procedures.

I believe that Jim is an excellent choice for Judge in the District Family Court of the Second Circuit and will help to make our community thrive.

Graciela Dyangko

February 2, 2021

The Honorable Karl Rhoads  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Hawai'i State Senate  
415 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**Re: Letter in Support of James R. Rouse as Family Court Judge for the Second Circuit**

Dear Senator Rhoads,

I am Ryan Anderson-Teshima and I write to you with whole hearted support of James R. Rouse as Family Court Judge for the Second Circuit. I am a Maui boy and graduate of H.P. Baldwin High School. I earned my undergraduate degrees from the University of Southern California and law degree from Southwestern Law School, both in Los Angeles. I practiced law in California before returning home to Maui in 2008. I am a former Deputy Corporation Counsel for the County of Maui, and since 2011 I have been a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for the County of Maui.

When Jim was a Deputy Public Defender, he and I both were assigned to Family Court. Myself being a prosecutor, we worked opposite sides of many Family Court criminal cases. Through those cases together, I had the opportunity to observe qualities in Jim which I believe will make him an outstanding Family Court Judge. Jim was always candid, reasonable and realistic in his dealings and negotiations with me, while simultaneously having great compassion for his clients. Jim's compassion, candor and reasonableness allowed us to reach a settlement in almost all the cases we had together; settlements which benefited his clients while also giving the prosecution and the victims a sense of justice.

One of the highlights of this assignment with Jim was that every two weeks, we travelled to Molokai together to cover Family Court criminal and juvenile cases. After finishing court business, we would spend the time exploring Molokai and discussing every topic under the sun. It was during this time that I really got to know Jim as a person and friend. What is readily apparent about Jim is his wit, humor and boundless enthusiasm. My many conversations with Jim allowed me to see his intellect, good character and passion for the law.

Before joining the Attorney General's office, Jim contemplated retirement. Since then, his work at the Attorney General's office, and especially his work with juveniles in Family Court have inspired, reinvigorated and reignited Jim's passion for the law. I truly believe that Jim's passion and energy are the qualities that will distinguish him as an exceptional Family Court judge.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter, and for considering James R. Rouse as District Family Court Judge for the Second Circuit.

Very Truly Yours,

  
Ryan Anderson-Teshima



OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER  
STATE OF HAWAII  
MAUI OFFICE

Allan J. ALMEIDA, Jr.  
Office of the Public Defender Investigator

81 North Market Street  
Wailuku, HI 96793

Main- 808-984-5018  
Cell-808-250-1003  
Email-[allan.j.almeida.jr@hawaii.gov](mailto:allan.j.almeida.jr@hawaii.gov)

HAWAII STATE SENATE  
THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
HONORABLE SENATOR KARL RHOADS, CHAIR  
HONORABLE SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALO, VICE CHAIR

DATED: 02/02/21

Re: Letter of recommendation for James R. Rouse for the District Family Court of the Second Circuit (Island of Maui).

Dear HONORABLE SENATOR KARL RHOADS,

I am writing this letter of recommendation to the Judicial Selection Commission for District Family Court of the Second Circuit Judicial Nominee James R. Rouse.

I have known James R. Rouse for over twenty-two years. I first met James R. Rouse while I was a deputy sheriff here on Maui, then as a colleague at the Maui Office of the Public Defender's as an investigator.

From my time at the public defenders, I worked a few cases for trial with James. I have always been impressed with James's ability to review complex criminal law issues and then be able to put those complex legal issues into plain words for the client to understand. In certain cases, James's would bring all interested parties to the table to find a workable outcome where everyone was validated with the final disposition being a win-win situation for all parties.

James R. Rouse would be a fine District Family Court Judge for the Second Circuit. Based on his education, experience, the ability to work with all sides of a legal case, loyalty, integrity and, having compassion.

In closing, I believe that James R. Rouse has the "right stuff" to be an outstanding Second Circuit District Family Court Judge. I hope that The Senate Judiciary Committee will review my letter of recommendation for consideration.

Yours truly,

/s/ Allan J. Almeida, Jr.

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 3:14:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b>  | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Heather Wolfenbarger | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Heather Wolfenbarger. I am writing to support the nomination of James Rouse to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit.

I had the honor and privilege of working alongside Mr. Rouse as a Deputy Public Defender for several years. He has a wealth of experience in handling family law matters and criminal defense litigation. In fact, he was always the go-to mentor and second chair in our office for jury trials due to his extensive experience and skill. He was always happy to lend his knowledge and give his support to less experienced attorneys trying to learn. He remains one of the most supportive colleagues I've ever had, and I work in a beautifully supportive office.

Mr. Rouse brings light and humor everywhere he goes. He is also highly intelligent and compassionate. He will no doubt be an absolute credit to the bench. I support his nomination completely and urge you to confirm him.

Mahalo nui loa,

Heather Wolfenbarger

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 3:30:21 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b>  | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jeffrey Wolfenbarger | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of Jim Rouse as a Judicial Nominee for the District Family Court of the Second Circuit. Since May 2017, I have been employed as a deputy public defender for the Office of the Public Defender --- Maui Office; however, I have been a practicing attorney since 2010.

I have known Jim for almost eight years, and I am honored to call him a friend and colleague. Jim is one of the most passionate attorneys I have ever had the privilege of knowing. Since I have known him, I have had the honor of working alongside him at the Public Defender's Office where he was the family court attorney representing juvenile clients, adult clients, and clients in involuntary commitment proceedings. I have also had the privilege of seeing Mr. Rouse work in his current employment.

If appointed to the judiciary, I can be certain that Mr. Rouse will bring his prior experiences to the bench. Having practiced on all sides, I know that Mr. Rouse will be fair and impartial to all parties who appear before him. Most importantly, I know Mr. Rouse cares about Maui County and the people of Hawaii, and he will make sure that everyone has a voice in his court.

Mr. Rouse should be confirmed.

Mahalo,

Jeffrey Wolfenbarger



**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 6:22:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| David Hayakawa      | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Senator Rhodes and the Judiciary Committee:

I submit this testimony in strong support of the appointment of James Rouse to the 2nd Circuit Family Court bench. I'm been a licensed attorney for 30+ years with a practice focused on Criminal and Family Court cases. I also serve as the Dean of the Bar Association Trial Academy and co-Chair of the Supreme Court Rule 1.14 Professionalism Course. I have known Jim Rouse for more than 25 years when we first bonded at the annual state-wide Public Defender training seminar as young attorneys with a hunger to take cases to trial. We then worked together practicing Family Law at Coates and Frey. In addition to being a very effective and prolific trial attorney, Jim was terrific at efficiently managing his busy Public Defender caseload, including handling for years the always challenging 2nd Circuit misdemeanor Family Court Domestic Violence calendar. Jim's transition to the Department of the Attorney General Family Law Section has provided him with what I believe is an unmatched exposure to the numerous non-divorce areas of the Family Court (although he handled divorce/custody litigation at Coates and Frey) which will enable him to "hit the ground running" upon assuming the bench. Jim has been involved with CPS, DOH Involuntary Commitments, Adult Protective Services, Juvenile cases, Office of the Public Guardian and many other areas of the Family Court in which a state agency is involved and represented by the AG. I'm confident that those individuals who Jim has worked with across the wide-spectrum of Family Court cases he now handles would agree that he is able to quickly determine what issues are important and to address those issues in an efficient manner, which will be especially important in the future given the Judiciary's COVID-related budget cuts. Jim is also an excellent teacher who enjoys helping newer lawyers improve their craft and I believe this skill will translate well to the bench. In summary, I believe Jim would be an outstanding addition to the 2nd Circuit Family Court bench given his extensive experience in all aspects of the wide-variety of cases handled by the Family Court and what I know will be an excellent judicial demeanor.

Respectfully,

/s/ David M. Hayakawa

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 8:15:34 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Alina Mason         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am writing in support of the confirmation of JAMES R. ROUSE to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit. I worked with Mr. Rouse from 2010 to 2011 at the Maui Office of the Public Defender and am honored to call him a friend of over a decade.

Mr. Rouse is a passionate and skilled advocate, whose love for the law has been apparent throughout his many years of practice. As a public defender, Mr. Rouse was known by his colleagues as a reasonable and fair-minded individual who also represented his clients vigorously and fought tirelessly for a fair outcome to their cases. As a deputy attorney general, he represented the State of Hawaii in family law matters, demonstrating a mastery of the nuances of Hawaii family law.

Mr. Rouse possesses the most important aspects of a judge's character: the ability to see issues from all sides and the compassion to make the right decisions. He will treat everyone who comes into his courtroom with the utmost respect and will represent the Hawaii judiciary with the honor it deserves. I do not doubt that Mr. Rouse will give one hundred percent every day to being an excellent judge. I hope you will see fit to confirm him.

Respectfully,

Alina Mason, Esq.

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 9:14:15 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Richard Sing        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

I am writing to support the confirmation of James Rouse for the position of Family Court Judge of the Second Circuit.

I am a solo practitioner concentrating in criminal defense who has appeared in the District, Family, Circuit, and Federal Courts, on a regular basis over the past 23 years. I am familiar with the histories, procedures, and personalities of the courts of all circuits.

Mr. Rouse is one of the brightest, quickest, and most competent attorneys that I have ever met. He has an excellent reputation in the community as well as years of practical "in the trenches" experience as a State Public Defender and private attorney. Public service needs honest, talented, and caring individuals like James Rouse

I believe that the opportunity to have such a qualified candidate for the position of Family Court Judge should not be passed up. Please feel free to call upon me if you have any questions or concerns at 537-1529.

Very Truly Yours,

*/S/ Richard H.S. Sing*

Ricahrd H.S .Sing

P.O. Box 749  
Kula, Hawai'i 96790

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February 3, 2021

Senator Karl Rhoads  
Judiciary Committee Chair  
State Capitol Building, Room 204  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Rhoads:

I am writing in support of James R. Rouse who is nominated to fill a vacancy in the district and family court in the Second Judicial Circuit.

I have known Jim since the late 90s here on Maui. We have practiced law the same length of time in the Maui County Bar. We worked together at the Maui Office of the Public Defender for over 11 years and working as the Maui Deputy Attorney Generals for the past 3 years.

Jim always brings enthusiasm and compassion to his legal work. As a deputy public defender he was an experienced courtroom litigator who did not shy away from difficult cases and was oftentimes able to communicate a defense by telling stories to juries so that they could better understand the case. He was very knowledgeable with the Hawaii Rules of Evidence and the substantive criminal law.

As a Deputy Attorney General, Jim uses his experience and legal knowledge to advise multiple departments of the State of Hawaii that we currently represent. Jim's familiarity with the courthouse and the judiciary staff are clear benefits to our clients. In every courtroom Jim appears, he is able to gain the respect of the court through his work ethic and demeanor in court. Jim has a high level of credibility with all the judges in the Second Circuit.

Jim will bring a wealth of experience to the bench. More impressively, Jim will bring compassion and understanding as a judge. I believe Jim will be able to form an understanding and rapport with the litigants who appear in his courtroom. His decisions will be well reasoned, compassionate and from a genuine place of understanding. He has appeared in front of all of the judges in the Second Circuit Court since the mid 1990s. He will bring the best aspects of all those prior judges, but will also bring his brand of judicial temperament to the bench.

Jim has the intellect and demeanor to make an outstanding district and family court judge for the community of Maui and I hope you consider his nomination strongly.

Sincerely,

Adriel C. S. Menor

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 9:32:39 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sandy Shiner        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

I am a social worker with family court on Maui and have been privileged to have known Jim Rouse for the past 15 years, when he served as public defender for juvenile clients and also when he worked with the attorney general's office. I have always found him very knowledgeable regarding the facts and the law in the cases with which he was involved. I also know him to have a warm and helpful personality, so he has always been a delight to work with. I strongly support his nomination as family court judge.

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 9:50:25 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Fatima Imara        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

I am a physician, testifying in support of Mr. Rouse for confirmation to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit. Mr. Rouse and I have worked together on several mental health petition cases over the last several years. He is professional and prepared, fair minded, and empathic. He is accessible, making himself available for questions and urgent matters that can and often do arise. I have always appreciated his candor and concern for the health and welfare of the most vulnerable members of the Maui community. On a personal level, Mr. Rouse is a proud grandfather, amiable and good humored to a fault. I fully support his nomination and confirmation to the court. Thank you.

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 10:22:07 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Diane Ho            | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

.Hawaii State Senate

Re: Confirmation of James Rouse

I unequivocally support the confirmation of Jim Rouse as a Family Court Judge in the Second Circuit. He has the skills, personality, empathy, temperament and common sense to make critical decisions that impact our community's families. I am comfortable that he will research and review the law when hearing a case, listen to litigants, be able to discern what is happening and will assist families in resolving their issues fairly. That is a critical skill necessary for a Family Court Judge.

I have been practicing law in the Second Circuit for forty years, the last 32 years specializing in divorces, property division and most importantly custody issues. I have known Jim Rouse for years and witnessed his handling of his own cases. I am confident that he will be an excellent Family Court Judge, who makes a difference in this community.

If you have any further questions, please contact me for more information.

Mahalo and Aloha,

Diane L. Ho (2485)

Sonya Toma, Esq.  
sonyatoma@gmail.com

February 3, 2021

Senator Karl Rhoads  
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary  
State of Hawaii Senate  
State Capitol, Room 204  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: JC10 –Submitting for the consideration and confirmation to the  
District Family Court of the Second Circuit, Judicial Nominee James R.  
Rouse

Dear Senator Rhoads:

This letter is being sent in support of James R. Rouse for confirmation to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit.

Mr. Rouse is a close friend and colleague whom I have known for over 20 years. We worked together at the Office of the Public Defender on Maui.

Mr. Rouse is highly qualified for this position. He has extensive experience as a litigator and public servant and has spent his career in protecting the legal rights of people in indigent and vulnerable populations. He has conducted countless jury trials and bench trials over the span of his long career and has a deep understanding of Family Law, the Rules of Evidence, and court procedure. Mr. Rouse mentored and trained new attorneys to prepare for both bench and jury trials. I have personally benefited from his mentorship throughout the years. He has served his community by volunteering in organizations that benefit children. Most importantly, he approaches others with respect and dignity, and is an exemplar of civility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Sonya Toma  
Sonya Toma



# DOI / LUKE

Attorneys At Law, A Limited Liability Law Company

GAVIN K. DOI  
KENDAL A. LUKE  
GRACE U. LEE

1600 Kapiolani Boulevard, Suite 1300  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-3801  
Website: [islandlawyers.com](http://islandlawyers.com)

Phone: (808) 593-2199  
Facsimile: (808) 593-2980  
E-mail: [gkdoi@islandlawyers.com](mailto:gkdoi@islandlawyers.com)

February 3, 2021

Committee on the Judiciary  
Hawaii State Senate  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE: Written testimony in support of the confirmation of James R. Rouse to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit; JC10**

Dear Senators:

My name is Gavin Doi, and I am an attorney in private practice, in good standing with the Hawaii State Bar Association for over 25 years. Practicing primarily in the fields of divorce and family law, I have had the opportunity to work with Mr. James R. Rouse in Maui, and enthusiastically support his confirmation as a Judge in the Second Circuit.

Although being on different sides of a legal issue, I have found Mr. Rouse to be fair, and open to discussion and compromise. He has an excellent grasp of the substantive and procedural law, and having practiced as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, a Deputy Public Defender, a Deputy Attorney General, and a private attorney has a diverse background well-suited for the bench. Equally important to the foregoing, Mr. Rouse has compassion and a positive attitude, which are both excellent, and sometimes overlooked qualities for a jurist.

I lend my support to Mr. Rouse's nomination without qualification. Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Sincerely,



Gavin K. Doi  
DOI/LUKE, AAL, LLLC

LAW OFFICES OF  
SETSUKO REGINA GORMLEY, LLC

---

P.O. Box 6220, Kahului, Maui, Hawaii 96733 • Telephone/Fax: (808) 463-3744  
Email: [ginagormleylaw@gmail.com](mailto:ginagormleylaw@gmail.com)

February 3, 2021

Senator Karl Rhoads  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Hawaii State Senate  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: James R. Rouse, JC 10

Dear Senator Rhoads and Committee:

I have had the honor of working with James R. Rouse at the Office of the Public Defender. Mr. Rouse is a dedicated attorney who is passionate about the law. At the Public Defender's office, he was always researching case law, brainstorming case law and strategies, and was always a mentor to everyone. Mr. Rouse is enthusiastic and passionate like no other.

Mr. Rouse is extremely knowledgeable about the law and has exceptional speaking and writing skills. It would do our community a great service to have Mr. Rouse sit on the bench. He can be fair and unbiased. His humbleness coupled with his knowledge of the law are qualities that we need in judges. He would serve Hawaii right.

Respectfully,



Setsuko Regina Gormley

STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER – MAUI OFFICE  
81 NORTH MARKET STREET – WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793  
TELEPHONE: (808) 984-5017

*Bradley J. Sova*  
*Deputy Public Defender*

February 3, 2021

Hawaii State Senate (31st Legislature, 2021)  
The Senate Judiciary Committee  
Honorable Senator Karl Rhodes, Chair  
Honorable Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

Re: Recommendation Letter for James Rouse for Second Circuit District Family Court Judge.

Honorable Senators,

I have known James “Jim” Rouse professionally and personally since I began working at the Maui Public Defender’s Office in September 2017. In that time, I have heard and observed the knowledge, experience, and passion that make Jim the ideal candidate to serve as the Second Circuit’s next District Family Court Judge.

In his career, Jim has decades of experience practicing in every manner of proceeding heard by our family court system. As a Deputy Public Defender, he represented hundreds of defendants before the Family Court, never backing down from any challenge and always seeking justice. Jim also spent years defending children in Family Court, always striving to secure their rights and ensure the system upheld its mission to assist and protect them. As a private attorney, he represented individuals seeking divorce and other relief from the family courts. As a Deputy Attorney General, he represents the interests of the state in all manner of proceedings before the family courts. To that end, I currently appear opposite Jim in involuntary commitment hearings. Even as an adversary, I admire his knowledge of the law and his dedication to ensure that it serves the community and those before the court. There is no one who has more hands-on experience with the varied challenges of family court practice.

More important than experience, however, is Jim’s passion. Anyone who knows Jim Rouse knows he has a big, vibrant personality—he exudes passion and energy in everything he does. In its varied proceedings, our family courts see some of the most vulnerable members of our society—children, the mentally ill, and those experiencing the breakdown of the most basic structures of the family. Jim understands this and he has the boundless knowledge, energy, and passion necessary to assist and serve these people and our broader community.

I aspire to emulate Jim and everything he has accomplished in his career; I am proud to have had him as a friend, colleague, and even as an adversary; and I am confident that he will serve our state and community well as the Second Circuit’s next District Family Court Judge.

Mahalo,



Bradley J. Sova, Esq.

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 3:31:41 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dana Souza          | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

I have known James Rouse for about twenty years as a friend and co-worker at the Maui Public Defenders Office. James is a straightforward, honest, hard working guy. As a public defender he has handled numerous family court cases and has been the best at it. He is very skilled at handling people's emotions and is determined to do the right thing for the client.

There were other attorneys assigned to family court however, family court cases often ended up back in James's lap which he accepted with open arms. James brought humor to the office and kept things light when others were down, although very serious and professional when it came to work. I support the appointment of James Rouse as District Family Court Judge of the Secound Circuit knowing the he will make a positive impact to our community with his experience and expertise.

February 3, 2021

Joseph Toma, Attorney at Law  
475 S. High St.  
Wailuku, HI 96793  
Telephone: (808) 281-3150  
email: [joettoma@gmail.com](mailto:joettoma@gmail.com)

Re: JC-10: James R. Rouse, Judicial Candidate, 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit

Honorable Chairman Rhoads & Members, Senate Judiciary Committee:

I strongly support the confirmation of James Rouse for appointment to the Maui District Court bench. I have known Jim since 1993-1994 a short time since my location to Maui from Oahu in 1992.

Jim has exceptional legal skills and knowledge. As a deputy public defender he has done many jury trials, and he has also worked in the private sector as a family law attorney. He possesses a sound and complete knowledge of the rules of evidence as most of his experience has been as a trial attorney. He also prepares thoroughly for his cases and is able to handle all manner of trials and judicial hearings. His quick with will serve him well in a judicial capacity.

Jim has a frank and candid manner, he is humble and respectful of others, and also has a great sense of humor. He is very capable of fairly receiving and reviewing evidence and analyzing complex fact situations in order to reach a fair decision under the law. His humility and respect for others is a quality often lacking in many judges and will serve Jim well.

I hold a high opinion for James' reputation for honesty, trustworthiness, character, integrity and citizenship. I have known him now for at least the last 26 years.

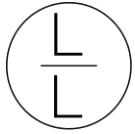
I believe that the chief justice correctly selected the best two candidates for the Maui district court in Mssrs. Dunn and Rouse.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Joseph Toma



February 3, 2021

Senator Karl Rhoads  
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary  
State of Hawaii Senate  
State Capitol, Room  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Via Email to: [senrhoads@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senrhoads@capitol.hawaii.gov)

**RE: Nomination of James Rouse for the District Family Court of the Second Circuit**

Dear Chair Roads and Senate Judiciary Committee Members:

I am writing in support of James Rouse for the Second Circuit District Family Court Judgeship. I have known Jim since I served as an intern at the Maui Public Defender's Office in 2012. I now serve as counsel for parents and children in child welfare cases, and work with him weekly in his role as Deputy Attorney General in the Family Law Division.

In fact, Jim assumed this position after I left to start a private law practice in 2017 so I can say that I am thoroughly familiar with the job. He has excelled in this role and has gained an abundance of additional family law experience, in addition to his prior experience, which he will bring to the bench.

He has overseen adoptions, guardianships, truancy petitions, mental health petitions, child welfare cases, and adult protective cases. Often these cases intermingle with juvenile cases, divorce cases, paternity cases, and protective order cases so it truly is a unique position that provides exposure to nearly all issues that come before the family courts.

Jim is universally respected and liked and has a special ability to bring levity to a situation when needed and earnestness when appropriate. He has dedicated his life to public service, and I know he will continue to make the Maui Bar proud in this new role.

Thank you for the opportunity to write on his behalf. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Erin Lowenthal, Esq.

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 8:55:04 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Brandon Paredes     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha kakou! It is with great pleasure that I submit this letter of support for James R. Rouse, Judicial Nominee for the District Family Court of the Second Circuit. I have known Jim for over 20 years, and for most of those years, I have been opposing counsel to him in court cases. Jim has always been respectful and straightforward as opposing counsel. Jim is very intelligent and reasonable, and he is an amazing advocate for his clients.

Jim is an energetic attorney that lights up the courtroom. He is eloquent in his speech and arguments, and he is very personable to everyone around him. I have no doubt that Jim will be a wonderful judge for the Family Court of the Second Circuit.

Without hesitation, I humbly submit these words of support for Jim R. Rouse.

Mahalo nui!

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/4/2021 1:11:27 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Matthew S. Kohm     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Senator Rhoads, Senator Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I am an attorney in the Second Circuit where I have practiced criminal and civil litigation since 1995. I was an insurance defense attorney in Honolulu in 1993-1995. I have been privileged to have an appellate practice our ICA and Supreme Court. As much of my appeals are criminal cases, I got to observe the attorneys handling trial matters.

I have known James "Jim" Rouse since I moved to Maui, and we have mutual friends, but my relationship is as a colleague and I do not socialize with Mr. Rouse, other then when I have seen him at attorney social matters, or at a mutual friends social functions, or when I was performing as a musician.

I have observed Mr. Rouse work as a deputy prosecutor, a deputy public defender, as an associate with the Coates & Frey (divorce law) law firm; and as a deputy attorney general for child support and family law matters. Much of his time as an attorney has been in family court handling juvenile custodies, family abuse, but also divorce cases, CPS, and child support matters. Mr. Rouse is an excellent trial attorney that is well spoken and able to use his quick wits and humor to great advantage. From a knowledge standpoint, he has all of the experiences necessary to be an effective family court judge. I think he will be a 'great' one because he knows both family criminal and civil (divorce) cases. I have had good discussions with Mr. Rouse regarding evidence issues and criminal procedure, as I will sometimes seek to run 'issues' that I am raising on appeal, by attorneys regularly in trial. I have had good discussions with him about procedure, evidence and other points; often this would involve issues on appeal. He is good at engaging and discussing the issues and would often give me something to think about.

I think that the Family Court of the Second Circuit is one of the most demanding courts for a sitting judge. It has demanding cases with charged issues that naturally arise in family disputes and the criminal family court matters. Given his experience as both a prosecutor and as a public defender, Mr. Rouse understands both sides. His experience handling divorce cases also will help the civil caseload of family court, and this is one that is often very difficult for attorneys that only have criminal law experience.



Mr. Rouse is often a public speaker at many of the attorney events because he is well spoken, funny and respected on the different sides of the attorney aisle. I also think he is well regarded among the court staff. Given these experiences, he would be able to handle the varying matters and assist other sitting judges in Family Court. Mr. Rouse has the skill, character and experience to help our Second Circuit Court with Family Court District Court matters, and I urge you to confirm his appointment for the (Family Court) District Court position.

On a personal note I would add that as a part time musician I have played in bands on Maui since I have been here; Mr. Rouse has been invited up a few times to sing with the band and would often sing an Aerosmith or Beatles song, and he could be quite engaging and entertaining. *(I add this fact to show his multifaceted nature).*

Thank you. Should you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to let me know how I may elaborate.

Matthew S. Kohm Bar #6103

808-249-8968

1335 Hiahia St., Wailuku, HI 96793

**JAMES S. TUBE**  
STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**DEFENDER COUNCIL**  
1130 NORTH NIMITZ HIGHWAY  
SUITE A-254  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

**HONOLULU OFFICE**  
1130 NORTH NIMITZ HIGHWAY  
SUITE A-254  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

**APPEALS SECTION**  
TEL. No. 586-2080

**DISTRICT COURT SECTION**  
TEL. No. 586-2100

**FAMILY COURT SECTION**  
TEL. No. 586-2300

**FELONY SECTION**  
TEL. No. 586-2200

**FAX (808) 586-2222**



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**LEE S. HAYAKAWA**  
ASSISTANT  
PUBLIC DEFENDER

**HILO OFFICE**  
275 PONAHAHAWAI STREET, STE 201  
HILO, HAWAII 96720  
TEL. No. 974-4571  
FAX No. 974-4574

**KONA OFFICE**  
81-948 WAENA 'OIHANA LOOP, STE 110  
KEALAKEKUA, HAWAII 96750  
TEL. No. 323-7562  
FAX No. 323-7565

**KAUAI OFFICE**  
3060 EWA STREET, ROOM 206  
LIHUE, HAWAII 96766  
TEL. No. 274-3418  
FAX No. 274-3422

**MAUI OFFICE**  
81 N. MARKET STREET  
WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793  
TEL. No. 984-5018  
FAX No. 984-5022

February 2, 2021

Dear Sirs/Madams of the Hawaii State Senate,

This letter is in support of nominee James ("Jim") Rouse for the open District Court Judge position. I am currently the supervising attorney of the Maui Office of the Public Defender. I have known Jim Rouse for approximately 16 years as a friend and colleague at the public defender's office.

As a deputy public defender, Jim was a warrior for the Constitution, fighting for our clients (typically the "underdogs"), protecting their rights and putting the government on notice when his clients' rights were being violated. During his time as an attorney in our office and then after moving to the office of the Attorney General, Jim has a unique ability to get along with everyone due to his jovial spirit, self-effacing sense of humor and love for humankind in general.

Jim has ample experience in both criminal and family law. He was in private family practice for some time, approximately 20+ years as a criminal defense attorney and now he has been at the Attorney General's office for three years. As a District Court or Family Court Judge, Jim Rouse would be open-minded, compassionate and knowledgeable on the law. He would be a great addition to the bench here on Maui.

Thank you for your consideration of Jim Rouse for this position as District Court Judge on Maui. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [Danielle.L.Sears@hawaii.gov](mailto:Danielle.L.Sears@hawaii.gov) or (808) 984-5013.

Sincerely,

*Danielle L. Sears*  
Supervising Attorney  
Maui Office of the Public Defender

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/4/2021 9:42:00 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Erin Yamashiro      | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members of the Committee on the Judiciary,

I write in strong support for the confirmation of James R. Rouse as a District Family Court Judge of the Second Circuit.

I've worked with Jim at the Department of the Attorney General Office for 3 years and believe that he demonstrates the qualities expected of a judge. During this time, he has masterfully handled numerous highly emotional family court cases with a patient and calm demeanor. I've known Jim to be a hardworking and energetic attorney with significant experience as a litigator. His intellect, together with his friendly demeanor, immediately makes a positive impression on others.

As a judge, I believe he will treat all parties and their attorneys with respect and courtesy. I strongly believe he will be firm, as well as compassionate, so all parties will feel that their voices were heard by a fair and impartial judge. Jim's experience, personality, and demeanor will serve the public well and are qualities that will make an excellent District Family Court Judge of the Second Circuit.

It is with great pleasure that I submit this testimony in support of James R. Rouse.

Sincerely,

Erin Yamashiro

**LATE**

**JC-10**

Submitted on: 2/4/2021 1:43:07 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2021 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Brandon Segal       | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee:

I write to support the nomination of James Rouse to the District Family Court, Second Circuit judicial position. I know Mr. Rouse through my employment as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney over the last seven years. Mr. Rouse has a good temperament, is professional, and has a wealth of experience in Family Court law. With his background and skills, I believe he would excel in this position.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Regards,

Brandon Segal

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

County of Maui

**LATE**

Good morning. My name is LeeAnn Galario-Guzman and I am a resident of Kihei, Maui, Hawaii. I am submitting this written testimony pertaining to JC 10, in favor of consideration and confirmation of James R. Rouse to the District Family Court of the Second Circuit, which will be on the Agenda scheduled for Friday, February 05, 2021. I am writing to humbly ask your confirmation of Mr. Rouse to the Bench in Maui County.

I have known Mr. Rouse for over 15 years and have known him to be consistent in his representations and who remains knowledgeable and current with the law.

I am a Police Officer by profession and first met Mr. Rouse when he was working for the Public Defender's Office on Maui. He always managed to represent his clients fairly and was always prepared when he came to Court. His behavior has always been consistent with both clients and Law Enforcement.

Many years later I again had the privilege to work with Mr. Rouse, who is currently employed with the State Attorney General's Office, working as a Juvenile Sex Assault Investigator. Mr. Rouse is always easy to work with, and always brings great ideas to our meetings.

I believe Mr. Rouse will flourish in both District Court, where his expertise of Criminal Law would be an advantage to everyone in Maui County, or Family Court, where his knowledge and experience in dealing with Family issues are unprecedented. I know he will be a fair and impartial and will be efficient and resolve issues quickly yet fairly and will be a definite asset to the Residents of Maui County and everyone in the State of Hawaii.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [leeanngalario808@gmail.com](mailto:leeanngalario808@gmail.com) or my cell, (808)357-3832.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**LATE**

Testimony of Susan L. Arnett  
to the Senate Committee on Judiciary

September 10, 2019

RE: JC10. NOMINATION OF JAMES R. ROUSE TO THE DISTRICT  
FAMILY COURT OF THE SECOND CIRCUIT, STATE OF HAWAII

Senator Rhoads, Vice-Chair Sen. Keohokalole and Members of the  
Committee:

I write in strong support of the nomination of James (“Jim”) S. Rouse as a  
District Family Court Judge for the Second Circuit.

I was a supervisor in the State Public Defender’s Office on Oahu and Maui  
for over 20 years. I first came to know Jim as a participant from the Maui  
PD office at the annual week-long PD Seminar of which I was in charge.  
Jim was noteworthy for his enthusiasm to engage in the trial skills  
exercises and be critiqued so that he could work to improve his already  
good skills and always sat in the front row for lectures.

I got to know him even better when I supervised the Maui PD office from  
1998 to 2001. Jim handled the FC-CR, i.e. domestic violence (DV),  
calendars in two courtrooms and across three islands (Maui, Molokai and  
Lanai). He also handled juvenile criminal cases before moving on to adult  
felony cases in Circuit Court on Maui. Jim was a “go to” attorney in the  
office, always ready to step in to assist fellow PDs and to cover for  
someone else, at a moment’s notice, if necessary. He kept “court clothes”  
in his office just to be available for such an occurrence.

He was passionate in his devotion to his clients, resolving cases without  
trial when possible, taking cases to trial when necessary. He was highly  
respected among judges, prosecutors and court personnel.

After I returned to Oahu, Jim and I kept in contact and I saw him annually at  
the Seminar. Unlike many experienced attorneys who had the opportunity  
to cover court matters during Seminar week, Jim chose to attend Seminar  
as he was always looking to improve his skills and increase his knowledge.

Upon leaving the PD office, I'm aware that Jim continued working in the Family Court arena, handling the very difficult Child Protective Services (CPS) calendar as a deputy attorney general.

Jim's background in criminal law (DV and Juvenile) and his work with the CPS calendar cover significant areas of the Family Court. I have no doubt that he will do everything necessary to learn the other civil areas of law he might be assigned to. His work ethic will assure that he reads everything presented to him and researches any area with which he is unfamiliar.

I have known Jim more than two decades. We became personal friends on Maui, socializing together; I know his family and am proud to say that his son followed in Jim's footsteps and is now a deputy public defender on Maui.

If confirmed, I believe Jim possesses the requisite demeanor, legal ability and ethical philosophy to be a tremendous asset to the bench. I wholeheartedly support his nomination.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

**LATE**

**DAVELYNN M. TENGAN**

Attorney At Law, A Limited Liability Law Company  
55-D N. Church Street  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Ph. (808) 268-8974  
[davelymntengan@gmail.com](mailto:davelymntengan@gmail.com)

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February 4, 2021

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads and the Senate Committee On Judiciary

Re: James Rouse, Judicial Nominee for District Family Court, Second Circuit

I support James Rouse for the position of Second Circuit Court District Family Court Judge, and respectfully urge his confirmation.

I have worked in the Maui legal community for many years and in that capacity I have known James Rouse as a Maui litigator, first as a deputy prosecuting attorney, then as a very talented public defender working in the most serious felonies, and for the last several years as a deputy attorney general.

He has vast professional experience and has always demonstrated a high level of integrity, diligence, and legal knowledge in his practices. Mr. Rouse has zealously represented his clients, whether the client is an individual or the State of Hawaii. He efficiently disposed of very large case loads, has demonstrated good time management skills, and has developed an expertise in various legal areas, including criminal law, constitutional law, evidence law, child protective law, and trial practice and procedures. He has also practiced family and divorce law. Mr. Rouse is unfailingly courteous, professional, and respectful to the judges before whom he practices as well as litigants and other attorneys. He is also fun and funny, and can lighten a too-heavy atmosphere with a brief but well placed line that brings a smile.

For Mr. Rouse, this opportunity to serve as a District Family Court judge is the highest opportunity to serve his island and the Maui community that he can achieve as a legal professional.

For all of these reasons, James Rouse is the right person to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position of Second Circuit Court District Family Court judge and will, if confirmed, be a credit to the Judiciary.

Very truly yours,

Davelynn M. Tengan



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**LAW OFFICE OF MATTHEW NARDI**

1975 E. Vineyard St. Ste. 407

Wailuku Hawaii 96793

Telephone 808-446-4224

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**LATE**

I am a solo practitioner licensed in Hawaii and California, and have been primarily practicing in Maui County since 2007. My practice area is concentrated on criminal defense, and civil litigation. In my 17 years of practice I have represented attorneys, corporate organizations, hundreds of individuals, and am often contacted by attorneys seeking my legal advice.

I have known Mr. Rouse for over 13 years, and have seen him appear in court numerous of times. I have witnessed Mr. Rouse while he was in trial, conducting evidentiary hearings, arguing substantive motions, and presenting sentencing arguments.

In my opinion Mr. Rouse would make an excellent District Court Judge. Mr. Rouse is committed to public service, the betterment of his community, and the rule of law. His passion for and commitment to our legal system is palpable, and, if selected as a District Court judge of the Family Court, would motivate him to work in a manner that exceeds the expectations of that position. Additionally, Mr. Rouse has excellent legal experience and knowledge, a love of learning, and an understanding of people and circumstances that I believe would give Mr. Rouse an excellent judicial temperament. Consequently, I strongly believe Mr. Rouse is well qualified to be a District Court Judge, and I humbly urge you to select Mr. Rouse as the next District Court Judge of the Second Circuit, Family Court Division.

Matthew Nardi, Esq.



Testimony of the  
HAWAII STATE BAR ASSOCIATION  
relating to the nomination of

**James R. Rouse**  
**District Family Court Judge of the Second Circuit (JC 10)**

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice-Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Levi Hookano  
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Friday, February 5, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 016  
State Capitol

The Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the nomination of James R. Rouse for the position of District Family Court Judge of the Second Circuit.

The HSBA Board of Directors followed its multi-step process to inform the confirming authority of its findings on this appointment.

- Notification to the nominee of the HSBA appointment review process, which includes a questionnaire requesting educational credentials, legal and other professional work experiences, personal references; a resume; a copy of the JSC application; a form authorizing disclosure from the Office of Disciplinary Counsel of any disciplinary action; and an interview with the HSBA Board of Directors.
- Notification via electronic transmission to the HSBA membership of the appointment and a request for comments on the nominee.
- Appointment of a three-person review subcommittee of HSBA Board members by the President which serves as a neutral fact-finding body to: review documentation submitted by the nominee, contact references submitted by the nominee, review comments received from the HSBA membership, and conduct follow-up member contact for clarification, if necessary, for presentation to the HSBA Board.
- Submittal of a report by the three-person review subcommittee to the President, and subsequently to the entire Board.

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- Meeting of the President, the Executive Director, and the nominee prior to the scheduled interview of the nominee by the Board.
- Interview of the nominee by the HSBA Board.
- Deliberation of the HSBA Board to determine if the nominees is qualified or unqualified.
- Submittal of the HSBA Board's recommendation to the confirming authority.

The HSBA President and the Executive Director met with Mr. Rouse on January 26, 2021 to discuss the subcommittee's findings. On January 27<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Rouse was interviewed by the HSBA Board of Directors in executive session.

Documentation submitted by Mr. Rouse was reviewed and the references listed were contacted for their personal opinions and observations. HSBA criteria utilized includes:

- Integrity
- Diligence
- Legal knowledge and ability
- Professional experience
- Temperament
- Financial responsibility
- Public service
- Health
- Ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position

After the interview of the nominee, which included dialogue and questioning relating to his background, experiences, and reasons for pursuing the position of District Family Court Judge of the Second Circuit, the Board of the Hawaii State Bar Association found Mr. James R. Rouse to be **QUALIFIED** for the position of District Family Court Judge of the Second Circuit.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments for consideration during the deliberations and decision making of our Committee.