



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM542**  
**Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the**  
**State Council on Mental Health,**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, LEA DIAS,**  
**for a term to expire 06-30-2023**

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOPE, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 2/18/2022

Hearing Time: 1:00 p.m.

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) **SUPPORTS** the nomination  
2 and confirmation of Lea Dias to the State Council on Mental Health.

3 **Department Testimony:** The role of the State Council on Mental Health is to advise, monitor,  
4 review and evaluate the provision of mental health services in the state. The State Council on  
5 Mental Health is an active advocate who provides a voice for children, youth, adults, and their  
6 families on behavioral health issues. Its membership is comprised of twenty-one dedicated  
7 volunteers representing consumers, family members, community members and state  
8 employees who give their time, energy, expertise and experience to improve and advocate for a  
9 system of care that provides quality mental health service to the people of Hawaii. The State  
10 Council on Mental Health is administratively attached to the Department.

11 Ms. Lea Dias fills the mandated State Council on Mental Health membership position of  
12 the principal state agency with respect to vocational rehabilitation, pursuant to Chapter 334-10  
13 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes and Federal Law, Public Law 102-321, Section 1914(c).

14 Ms. Dias is the Administrator for the Department of Human Services (DHS), Vocational  
15 Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division (DVR), Ho’opono Services for the Blind Branch.

1 She is uniquely qualified to be a member of the State Council on Mental Health. She has almost  
2 30 years of experience working with individuals with disabilities, including individuals with  
3 mental health challenges, and assisting in their vocational development. She has held various  
4 positions within the DHS DVR providing her with a counseling perspective as well as experience  
5 in policy development. Additionally, her active engagement with national membership  
6 organizations will bring insight to the State Council on Mental Health on activities and best  
7 practices from other jurisdictions. Ms. Dias will be a great addition to the State Council on  
8 Mental Health.

9 The Department strongly supports the appointment of Ms. Dias to the State Council on  
10 Mental Health.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

February 15, 2022

TESTIMONY TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TO CHAIR KEOHOKALOLE, VICE CHAIR BAKER, AND MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH  
COMMITTEE:

For Hearing on Friday, February 18, 2022  
1:00 p.m., via Videoconference

I am writing on behalf of Ms. Lea Dias, Branch Administrator, with the Hawaii State Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, to support her nomination to the State Council on Mental Health.

I have known Ms. Dias professionally and personally for approximately 20 years. We have both walked the same path throughout our career, starting as an entry-level counselor, earning a Master's Degree in Education with a specialization in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and finally ascending to the position as Branch Administrator. Throughout her tenure, Ms. Dias has developed the knowledge, skills, abilities, and values to empower individuals with disabilities to gain competitive employment, independent living, and quality of life.

I have full confidence that Ms. Dias will greatly contribute to the goals and mission of the State Council on Mental Health.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Ms. Dias.

*Shawn Yoshimoto*  
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