



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM544  
Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the  
State Council on Mental Health,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, CHRISTOPHER KNIGHTSBRIDGE,  
for a term to expire 06-30-2025**

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOLE, 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 Christopher Knightsbridge 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 Mr. Christopher Knightsbridge fills the mandated State Council on Mental Health  
12 membership position of an adult with the lived experience of serious mental illness (SMI) who is  
13 receiving, or has received, mental health services, pursuant to Chapter 334-10 of the Hawaii  
14 Revised Statutes and Federal Law, Public Law 102-321, Section 1914(c).

1           Mr. Knightsbridge is a 2002 graduate of Kealakehe High School in Kailua-Kona. He holds  
2 a master's degree in International Relations and Clinical Psychology.

3           He is an advocate for helping individuals to access quality mental health care. He is very  
4 passionate about helping to combat the negative stigma attributed to mental health disorders.  
5 His motivation for serving in the field of mental health comes from his personal experience  
6 growing up on the Big Island in a family where multiple members struggled with mental illness.  
7 He has self-disclosed his own mental health status, noting that depression and his overall  
8 personal experiences with various barriers preventing ease of accessing mental health  
9 treatment in Hawaii. Along with his personal experiences with mental health care and  
10 treatment, Mr. Knightsbridge has amplified his passion for exploring options to address mental  
11 health issues in our state by offering solutions to alleviate Hawaii's behavioral health workforce  
12 shortage.

13           Mr. Knightsbridge is an active member of the State Council on Mental Health and the  
14 Mental Health Task Force. He has served as an Executive Officer for the State Council on  
15 Mental Health for the past three years and is currently serving as First Vice Chairperson. Mr.  
16 Knightsbridge is the lead member for two Permitted Interaction Groups including legislation  
17 and onboarding/reboarding. He has worked hard to strengthen State Council on Mental Health  
18 members' understanding of mental health in Hawaii and uniquely for each Neighbor Island and  
19 County.

20           The Department strongly supports the appointment of Mr. Knightsbridge to another  
21 term on the State Council on Mental Health.

22           Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**GM-544**

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 1:21:44 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/18/2022 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Richard Ian Ries	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

RE: Testimony in support of Christopher Knightsbridge’s reappointment to the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health

To Whom it Concerns:

I am writing in support of the reappointment of Christopher Knightsbridge to the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health. Mr. Knightsbridge not only represents a service recipient in our community, but is himself also a promising doctoral student in psychology with a notable commitment to Hawai’i. I have known and served as a professional mentor to Mr. Knightsbridge for several years and can attest, again, to his solid moral fiber, open-minded intelligence and uncommon resourcefulness. In both graduate study and with personal and family experiences relevant to this role, I am confident that Mr. Knightsbridge will continue to bring important, clear and valuable perspectives to the board and department.

Mr. Knightsbridge is known to be consistent with following both local and national news that stand to affect our communities and is quick to volunteer in his present role on the council. I His personal may be on more project groups than any other member. What’s more he recently was elected up from 2nd Vice Chairperson to 1st Vice Chairperson, a testament to other members’ similar confidence in his trustworthiness and abilities. As I mentioned in a similar letter, he cares a great deal about justice, without sacrificing compassion for others. There are few individuals that I respect to the degree that I do Mr. Knightsbridge. Without reservation I recommend his consideration for reappointment.

Respectfully,

Richard I. Ries, M.S.Ed., Psy.D.

Licensed Clinical Psychologist and



Chairperson of the Hawai'i State Council on Mental Health

**LATE**

Feb 16, 2022

Honorable Members of the State Legislature,

My name is Dr. Eileen Lau- James. I am a veterinarian, a veterinary hospital owner, the mother of two spirited young boys, the dedicated wife of a husband that was recently diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder. I currently serve on the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health representing family members of individuals suffering from serious mental illness.

It is a pleasure today to endorse Christopher Knightsbridge as a returning member for the Hawaii State Council on Mental Health – representing consumers/individuals suffering from mental illness.

Christopher has served his first term on the State Council with dedication and distinction. He a fierce and passionate advocate for his constituents, and he is also arguably one of the most knowledgeable individuals on island on the unique set of challenges faced by consumers today. (Sometime within the next 1-2 years, he will be awarded his PhD in psychology.)

Christopher is not only passionate and knowledgeable – he has the grit to push through barriers and gets things done. He has been instrumental in changing how the council handles emergent legislative issues. The fact that he has been elected to serve as the vice-chair of the council two years in a row is a testament to his dedication to the State Council on Mental Health.

Being that he also struggles with his own serious mental illness daily - Christopher's achievements are dually impressive.

The island is so fortunate that Christopher choses to dedicate his time and extensive breath of knowledge towards mental health advocacy. I wholeheartedly recommend that he be reappointed to serve again for a second term.

Aloha and Warm Regards,

Eileen Lau-James DVM  
Hawaii State Council on Mental Health – Family Member  
Owner and Veterinarian  
Purradise Cat Care Inc.