

DATE: March 28th, 2022

TO: Office of State Senator Joy San Buenaventura

FROM: Joseph O'Connell, Nominee for State Commission on Fatherhood

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1) Why do you wish to be a member of the Commission of Fatherhood?

I would like to be a member of this commission to assist with strengthening efforts to support fathers' in knowing their importance in the lives of their children and the community.

2) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the Commission on Fatherhood?

A good Commissioner on Fatherhood would have a pulse on their community and the needs of those they serve and then advocate based on those needs in the most effective manner. They would be able to see a need and effectively have the need addressed.

3) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Commission on Fatherhood, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member of the Commission on Fatherhood.

I feel my foster father experience over the past 7 years has given me a unique perspective on being a father and seeing the impact on children being raised without their biological parents/fathers in their life. Also, I feel that I am qualified for the position because of my specific knowledge in the areas of Social Service and Policy Advocacy. Additionally, I already play an active role of supporting fathers. I supervise a weekly fatherhood support group and assist with the coordination of the Annual Fatherhood Conference.

4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

To support the presence of fathers in our community.

5) Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the Commission on Fatherhood?

#1 Knowledgeable with the current system - I have a deep and wide knowledge and first hand experience of the custody and child welfare system and I am very familiar with the challenges facing our fathers.

#2 Outside the box - I am an asset to have on a team, I am familiar with technology and have a natural ability to come up with creative solutions to difficult challenges.

#3 Networker - I am in touch with our community and the people and resources that run deep and make our East Hawaii Community so rich. I have a consistent ability to make connections happen.

6) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the Commission on Fatherhood?

I have worked in the CWS system for the past 10 years. This has given me an ability to see the struggles that face our community in a very 3 dimensional way.

7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the Commission on Fatherhood? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?

I do not see any conflicts arising. If conflicts of interest did arise I would remain out of the related discussions, influencing and voting.

Joseph O'Connell,

GM-574

Submitted on: 4/1/2022 8:08:20 PM

Testimony for HMS on 4/5/2022 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allen Bartolome	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chiar San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara and Members on the Committee on Human Services,

I am writing to you in support the conformation Joseph O’Connel to the Commission on Fatherhood (GM574). Mr. O’Connell is an outstanding member of our community and has changed many lives of foster youth. A link provided below is in example of his inspiring story of overcoming adversity as a foster youth and becoming a local hero.

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2019/12/26/hawaii-news/heroes-next-door-one-time-foster-kid-dedicates-his-life-to-parenting-and-improving-the-system/>

Mahalo for your time in this matter.