



March 21, 2022

Dear Senator Joy San Buenaventura:

Re: Nomination to the State Rehabilitation Council

Thank you for my nomination by Governor David Y. Ige to the State Rehabilitation Council. I look forward in serving another term. Here is my response to the questions:

- (1) As a member of the State Rehabilitation Council I am able to support the needs of the disabled community of Maui County and the state of Hawaii.
- (2) As a member my years of experience working with the disabled community I am very knowledgeable of their needs, challenges and lack of services and support.
- (3) I feel that I am qualified because of my years of experience working not only with support groups but assisting many Individuals with a diverse of disabilities with services such as, home health care, advocating for housing and accessibility needs, networking with medical professionals, social workers, case managers in navigating for a client/patient's needs. I fully understand the needs of the disability community and I am able to contact resources and create a network of support. Although I do not have the credentials, my years of experience explains my work. Education is the key for our community/society to understand the needs, challenges, and support that Individuals with disabilities needs to live independently and have quality of life for as long as possible.
- (4) Education, Resources, network capabilities, and finding solutions to the problems. Giving the disability a chance to voice their concerns and taking it to heart to help make a difference in their lives.
- (5) Self-taught being there to learn, hands on experience, Patience, and knowledge. My expertise/training was from client themselves and support groups. Allowing them to have a voice and listening with my heart. Putting that individual first and not the disability.

99 Mahalani Street  
Wailuku, Hi 96793

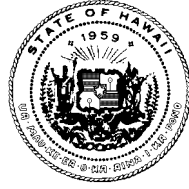
- (6) Education. As Chairperson for Maui County Commissions on Persons with Disability I felt that many of the commissioners needed education on the diverse of disabilities. It is important that commissioners understand what our roles are and who we represent. What I have done is invite the different agencies/organizations to do a presentation about their services, which disability community they represent. This has provided each of the commissioners a clearer understanding as well as education about disabilities because many of their needs differ. It also helped us identify if this was a County, or State issue.
- (7) I do not see any conflict of interest since I am an Independent Living Specialists/Advocate for MEO-Maui Independent Living Center. If there is a conflict I would like to be told immediately and to be sure that I remove myself as needed. I do not see any conflicts that I am aware of.

Sincerely,

Evalina N. Watanabe

99 Mahalani Street  
Wailuku, HI 96793

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

April 1, 2022

TO: The Honorable Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura  
Senate Committee on Human Services

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

SUBJECT: **GM 660 – Relating to consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Evalina Watanabe, for a term to expire on 06-30-2025.**

HEARING: Tuesday, April 5, 2022, 3:00 P.M.  
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference, State Capitol

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Department of Human Services, supports the nomination and confirmation of Ms. Evalina Watanabe to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

Ms. Watanabe seeks an appointment to the SRC as a representative for the Disability Advocacy Groups per section 348-8(a)(6), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). She will represent 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 representing themselves or are unable to represent themselves due to their disabilities.

Ms. Watanabe resides in Maui County; thus, her nomination satisfies the federal requirement of "at least one member from each county," codified in Hawaii law at section 348-8(a)(10), HRS. Further, Ms. Watanabe is a Maui County Commission on Persons with Disabilities member.

Ms. Watanabe is also an Independent Living Specialist that understands the needs of those within the disability community and currently is an advocate assisting families with children and adults with disabilities navigate the homecare and healthcare systems. Ms. Watanabe's advocacy background and experiences would be an asset to the SRC.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this nomination.