

Dear Senator Joy San Buenaventura

Re: Nomination to the State Rehabilitation Council-Statement of Intent

Thank you for your due diligence into background information and qualifications to serve on the State Rehabilitation Council.

- (1) I would like to continue serving on the State Rehabilitation Council for another term because two years was not enough to provide significant support and action to the duties of being a Council member especially during the pandemic.
- (2) The role and responsibilities of a member of the State Rehabilitation Council is to review, analyze, and advise the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in regards to: eligibility to include the present situation of the order of selection. In partnership with DVR: develop and review State goals and priorities; evaluate the effectiveness of the VR program; review the submittal of the annual progress report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner; ensure that DVR conduct a statewide need assessment of individuals with disabilities living in the State; review and analyze the effectiveness of the consumer satisfaction reports; assist in the preparation of the Unified State Plan; and report to the Governor and RSA on the status of the DVR services.

A more detailed list is provided in the State Rehabilitation Council Fact Sheet that was disseminated at the New Members Orientation workshop.

- (3) My qualifications for being a member of the Rehabilitation Council would be my years of service to the State of Hawaii as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (Certified by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification). Prior to that I was I was a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist through the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. My passion to advocate for persons with disabilities was introduced by Sr. Agnes Jerome, SND at Star of the Sea School back in 1965 when she first started the Waialae Catholic Center which later became the Special Education Center of Oahu (SECO) located off Diamond Head Road. The 7th and 8th graders were asked to assist and play with the students during recess. I also had cousins who were intellectually disabled and received services through the Department of Health at Waimano Training School and Hospital.

My first State of Hawaii employment was as a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist with the Department of Health at Waimano Training School and Hospital. Traveling from Kaneohe to Pearl City was challenging as my husband and I had started our family. In 1980 I started working at the Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific. As a Recreation Specialist I was involved with Wheelchair Sports Hawaii

and the Special Olympics. In 1985 I was involved with Easter Seals and accompanied several young Hawaii athletes to the Jr. National Wheelchair Games in Pennsylvania.

In 1986, I was asked to join the Therapeutic Recreation Unit of the City and County of Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation, Recreation Support Services. At that time the City and County of Honolulu was being sued for non-compliance of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed by President George H.W. Bush and the Hawaii Center for Independent Living was founded soon after. As a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, I worked closely with HCIL and Protection and Advocacy (now known as the Hawaii Disability Rights Center). I also worked closely with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation due to receiving \$200,000.00 to expand the Therapeutic Recreation Unit by hiring people with disabilities who were qualified to assist as Recreation Aides at various parks around the island of O`ahu. That's how I became interested in continuing my education.

In 1993, I decided to return to the University of Hawaii for a Master Degree in Counselor Education, Rehabilitation Counseling. I became involved with the Interagency Transition Project led by the University of Hawaii, University Affiliated Program now known as the Center for Disability Studies.

The Statewide Independent Living Council was founded in 1998. During that time, I was busy working for the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (which was under different names as it was shifted to different State Departments). I managed the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program and worked closely with the Attorney Generals Office and other State agencies as well as the community with Weed and Seed and other prevention programs for youths and families in public housing.

In 2004 I transferred to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and continued to advocate for youth with disabilities as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. At Ho`opono Service for the Blind, my caseload included transition-aged youth as well as adults who were blind or visually impaired. As a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, I advocated for Independent Living and encouraged people on my caseload to attend the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Quarterly meetings.

When I retired in 2014, I continued to attend SILC meetings and was appointed as a member of the SILC Board. SRC required a SILC member to attend meetings and report on SILC activities. I volunteered to be the SILC representative and that's how I became a SRC Board member.

- (4) As an SRC member I have volunteered to be on the Legislative Committee and the Needs Assessment Committee. I also volunteered to Chair the State Plan Committee. As the State Plan Committee, we are tasked to review the Hawaii Unified State Plan of 2020-2023 and provide input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the plan. I hope to become as knowledgeable as possible with the contents of the Unified State Plan and together with the other members of the committee, prioritize our tasks, make specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely goals to complete our review and make recommendations to help support and ensure DVR is focusing on the right targets for the services needed by the consumers.
- (5) I am dedicated, resourceful, and fastidious. I have a proven history of being committed to tasks asked of me. People who know me; know why I am of value to the SRC.
- (6) I have been the Treasurer for the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii-Anuenue Chapter for over 10 years. I can organize family and community events with limited funds.
- (7) I do not foresee any possible conflicts of interests that would impede my service on the SRC.
- (8) I want to share that my husband, Gary Tashiro received Vocational Rehabilitation Services from 1967 through 1973. DVR assisted in finding a job for him at Hickam Air Force Base now known as Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. He retired in 2013 with almost 40 years of service. Our youngest son, Gavin Tashiro received Special Education services and DVR services after he graduated from Castle High School-2003. He was able to find a job at Foodland. DVR took credit for his employment success even if he independently did most of the work. He has been with Foodland for over 15 years.

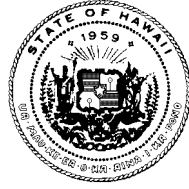
If you have any concerns or would like clarify any of the statements above please contact me at (808) 384-8319 (cell/text).

Sincerely,

Annette C. Tashiro
Chair, Statewide Independent Living Council

Cc: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Senator Sharon Moriwaki

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 663 – Relating to consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Annette Tashiro, 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. Annette Tashiro to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

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

Ms. Tashiro is a retired Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and is familiar with the vocational rehabilitation program and the needs of individuals with disabilities. Ms. Tashiro continues to be an active community member as an advocate for Emergency Preparation, Homeless, Aging with Dignity, and Equal Access to community services. Ms.

Tashiro's advocacy for individuals with disabilities and vast experience would be an asset to the SRC.

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