

March 26, 2022

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura
Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Senator

Dear Senator San Buenaventura,

Thank you for the opportunity to present my background and interest in conjunction with my application to serve in the State Rehabilitation Council for the State of Hawaii. Once again, I am honored to be nominated by Governor David Y. Ige to serve as one of the Disability Advocacy Group Representatives in the Council.

I am currently serving as a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) member in the same capacity, which expires on June 30, 2022. I want to extend my service to the Council for the next term. I am committed to working with, assisting, and advocating for individuals with disabilities. I value the goals and responsibilities that the Council is tasked to do, and I know I can contribute my knowledge and expertise in protecting the rights of our citizens with disabilities. I fully promote and support the importance of educational equity, personal independence, financial freedom, and social-emotional well-being of individuals with disabilities in one's quality of life.

As a member of the SRC this past year, I believe I am well qualified to fill the role of a Disability Advocate with the Council. My educational background includes a Ph.D. in Education, specializing in Exceptionalities (Special Populations), MS in Rehabilitation Counseling, and Post-Master's degree in Rehabilitation Engineering Technology. My additional certifications include a Post-Graduate Certificate in Brain Injury and a Teaching Certificate in Special Education. My education, training, and experience focused primarily on understanding the needs, services, and effective practices in assisting individuals with disabilities throughout their lifespan.

My professional experiences in the last 36 years enabled me to work with individuals with disabilities in various capacities. My work as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Mental Health Counselor, University Disability Services Counselor, and a Special Education Teacher allowed me to learn and understand the importance of equity in accessing services that provide for a reasonable quality of living. I also had the opportunity to learn and understand the legal aspects and policies that are in place that may aid or impair a person's ability to access their community, their education, and their daily living activities.

I am well-versed in the rights afforded by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). During my tenure as a Disability Services Counselor, I had the opportunity to educate my colleagues in the needs, legal rights, and necessary accommodations that students with disabilities require to access their education.

Catherine A. Taylor
Nomination SRC

Enrollment in my program increased over my tenure at the college. I was also able to pave the way for students with severe disabilities to attend the University of Hawaii, Maui College, with the support of the Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

My education, training, and experiences make me a good fit with the Council. I am a passionate and indefatigable advocate of my students, peers, and clients in their pursuit of equity. However, this pursuit is not without challenges, and my ability to listen without judgment and collaborate with others in addressing their concerns helped me handle situations such as lack of awareness, bias, lack of resources, or political agenda. I am also flexible and creative in finding solutions when none are identified.

As a member of the SRC, I intend to share my tacit knowledge gained from my experiences and education to be an effective advocate for individuals with disabilities. Students with disabilities graduating from high school, entering the workforce, and engaging in post-secondary activities are of particular interest. I hope to help establish a streamlined process for students with disabilities to transition from K-12 to post-high school activities with appropriate support that promotes their successful transition to adulthood. I want to help develop and advocate for policies that will make the transition process fully established in the State of Hawaii. I believe that our youth are our greatest future workforce and our students with disabilities are no exception. I hope my work with the Council will pave the way for this endeavor.

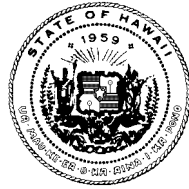
I do not foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during my service with the State Rehabilitation Council. However, should one occur, I will immediately inform the membership and discuss solutions to avoid the potential conflict. If needed, I will recuse myself from the activities that may be a potential conflict.

Thank you very much for considering my application and my testimony for the nomination to the State Rehabilitation Council. I am confident that you will find that my qualifications and personal characteristics fulfill the requirements of the position of Disability Advocate.

I look forward to your committee's decision on my nomination.

Respectfully,
Catherine A. Taylor, PhD
Nominee, State Rehabilitation Council

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
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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 664 – Relating to consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Dr. Catherine Taylor, 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 Dr. Catherine Taylor to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

Dr. Taylor 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).

Dr. Taylor resides in Maui County, thus satisfying the federal requirement and codified in State law in section 348-8(a)(10), HRS, that the "council shall include at least one member from each county."

Dr. Taylor has been a teacher employed by the Department of Education (DOE) for 16 years, with credentials that include a Doctorate in Education, specializing in Exceptionalities,

and a Master of Science degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Dr. Taylor has extensive knowledge and understanding of working with individuals with disabilities and supporting their educational needs as they transition to employment and post-secondary education. She has worked closely with DVR counselors in facilitating the transition of individuals with disabilities into the workforce and vocational and college programs as a Rehabilitation Counselor and as a Disabilities Counselor at the University of Hawaii, Maui College. Ms. Taylor's confirmation for a second term will be an asset to the SRC.

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