

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 13 2023

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 517

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2023  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 517, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

G.M. No. 517      TOMMY JOHNSON,  
for a term to expire at noon on 12-07-  
2026,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Tommy Johnson for service as the Director of Public Safety.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Tommy Johnson from the Governor; Department of Transportation; Department of Law Enforcement; Department of Taxation; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Human Resources Development; Department of Budget and Finance; Department of Public Safety; Department of Health; Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; Department of Agriculture; Office of Enterprise Technology Services; Hawaii Public Housing Authority; Hawaii Paroling Authority; Crime Victim Compensation Commission; Office of the Public Defender; Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu; Ho'omana Pono, LLC; Hina Mauka; and twenty-three individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to the nomination for the appointment of Tommy Johnson from United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-



CIO; Hawai'i State AFL-CIO; and five individuals. Your Committee received comments on the nomination for the appointment of Tommy Johnson from the Women's Prison Project and American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Johnson's experience, background, and knowledge of Hawaii's correctional system qualify him for appointment as the Director of Public Safety. Mr. Johnson has worked in corrections for over twenty years and currently serves as the acting Director of Public Safety, where he is responsible for the formulation and implementation of state policies and objectives for correctional and law enforcement activities and oversees more than three thousand employees. Mr. Johnson previously served as the Deputy Director for Corrections, where he worked on the development of prison programs centered on education and rehabilitation and managed the Corrections Division of the Department of Public Safety consisting of six divisions and offices encompassing most of the Department's personnel and budget, including over two thousand three hundred staff and an annual budget of more than \$220,000,000.

Your Committee notes that, in addition to his decades of public service in the Hawaii corrections system, Mr. Johnson also served in the United States Army for more than fifteen years, where he received the Bronze Star Medal for outstanding service and leadership during the Persian Gulf War and two Meritorious Service Medals, among other commendations. Mr. Johnson also has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and Administration from the Army Educational Service Center at the United States Military Academy West Point and Mount Saint Mary College in New York.

Your Committee finds that Mr. Johnson has served in the state corrections system at every level. Starting as a Youth Corrections Officer at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility, Mr. Johnson worked his way up to eventually serve as the Administrator of the Hawaii Paroling Authority, a position he served in for nearly sixteen years. Your Committee believes that Mr. Johnson's career path has given him key insight and knowledge to support the rehabilitation of inmates and their reintegration into the community after release, and that this knowledge will be essential to transition the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and to reshape the State's corrections system as a whole according to a therapeutic



and rehabilitative model. Your Committee finds that Mr. Johnson brings to the Department of Public Safety extensive expertise in corrections, rehabilitation, and public safety, and will be an asset to the Department at this critically important time. Your Committee therefore recommends that Tommy Johnson be appointed as the Director of Public Safety based on his experience, knowledge, and commitment to public service.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, has found the nominee to be qualified for the position to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Public Safety and  
Intergovernmental and Military  
Affairs,

  
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GLENN WAKAI, Chair



