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Judy Guajardo – judy@nahoaloha.org

Re: Governor’s Message No. 553 Nomination of Judy Guajardo to the State Rehabilitation Council

1) Why do you wish to be a member of the State Rehabilitation Council?

Initially, I submitted the application to be a member of the State Rehabilitation Council because it is my responsibility as Chairperson to represent the Statewide Independent Living Council. Over the last several months of orientations and attending meetings, I have come to realize the importance of membership in a group made up of service providers and educators who have direct influence in how our community services persons of all ages and abilities. I wish to be part of a group of caring, committed leaders in the community and bring change and improvement to better serve those people.

2) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the State Rehabilitation Council?

I perceive the role and responsibilities of being a member of the State Rehabilitation Council is to work together as leaders to identify conditions and systems that can improve services for individuals who can benefit from receiving rehabilitation services.

3) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the State Rehabilitation Council, 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 State Rehabilitation Council.

I am passionate about being a conduit for change when it will benefit persons who have a disadvantage over their living or working conditions due to inequity of environmental, social, or financial systems. As an older adult, I have spent the last 14 years helping to bring awareness about the conditions of the aging population and providing direct services to enhance their daily lives while striving to live independently. I have successfully managed operations, volunteer programs and client enrollments for direct services for Na Hoaloha since 2014. I have a great understanding of the needs of older adults and persons with disabilities who struggle to maintain a sense of control and equality. It is my responsibility to know what resources are available and to coordinate those resources. Working collaboratively with stakeholders and agency leaders is another responsibility I take seriously.

While raising my children, I spent many years advocating for improvement in education systems that did not address the needs of students with learning disabilities or otherwise required individualized work, study programs. I created a volunteer program to keep the school library open when it wasn’t in the budget to do so, by recruiting Grandparents who gave their time to reading, sharing, and teaching students. It benefited both generations.

I seek solutions to problems and implement changes when necessary to improve or enhance conditions.

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

I hope to learn more about how I can contribute to the leadership of the council and be part of decision making that can greatly benefit those who rely on rehabilitation services. It is my desire to be much more familiar with state agencies that directly affect independent living for all.

5) Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the State Rehabilitation Council?

The three qualities that best describe me and make me stand out are:

1. Care and compassion for all people who face obstacles in life and help them realize their potential.
2. My ability to seek solutions and engage others to participate for better results.
3. Capacity to grow in understanding cultural and environmental differences.

6) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the State Rehabilitation Council?

During the pandemic, direct services were difficult and it was necessary to maintain contact with our older adults who were alone and afraid. One of the first pivots I made was to set up the "Comfort Calls" program. I enhanced the ongoing telephone reassurance program and added inquiries such as food supply, addition family and friends contact information, and their self-described feelings of loneliness. Volunteers who were not providing in-person care could now call seniors and build a connection and help calm the fears as well as learn who was looking in on them and if they needed a grocery shop. During this activity, I learned that persons who were receiving SNAP/EBT did not have access to online ordering or pick-up services at grocery stores. I shared this information with the newly formed Kupuna Food Insecurities Coalition and a committee was formed to address the issue. It took a little time, but today this is not an issue and the EBT cards are accepted by all major grocery outlets and food vendors.

This is only one example of how working collaboratively for a cause can bring about positive change. Many who need rehabilitation services face discrepancies.

7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the State Rehabilitation Council? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interests?

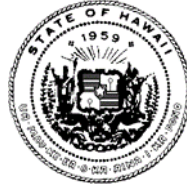
I cannot see any conflicts of interest that could arise during my service on the State Rehabilitation Council. If I ever had any inking of a conflict, I would seek council on the matter from SRC leadership on a local and/or national level. I serve on the Board of Statewide Independent Living Council and am employed by a non-profit who provides direct service to older adults and persons with disabilities. All of my interests are focused on the enhancement of independent living for those demographics. In this capacity, I do not see any conflict.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my interests, achievements and contributions to the community. Your consideration for nomination and confirmation is appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Judy Guajardo

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KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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March 28, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director
Lea Dias, Acting Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

SUBJECT: **GM 553 – Relating to consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Judy Guajardo, for a term to expire 06-30-2025**

Hearing: March 29, 2023, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Videoconferencing, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the nomination and confirmation of Ms. Judy Guajardo to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Governor's Message is to consider and confirm the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee Judy Guajardo, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

The SRC was established by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The SRC works with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) on services that address the employment needs of individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Guajardo is seeking an appointment to the SRC to represent the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). A representative may be the chairperson or other designee of the SILC as established by section 348-8(a), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), as required by Title 29 U.S. Code § 725, et seq. Ms. Guajardo resides on Maui, thus satisfying the state statute requirement of "at least one member from each county" (section 348-8, HRS).

Ms. Guajardo is the volunteer coordinator at Nā Hoaloha – an organization that provides care to seniors and individuals with disabilities in Maui County. Among other things, Ms. Guajardo recruits, trains, and supports volunteers and participants to enable participants to live independently and enhance their quality of life. In addition, Ms. Guajardo supports volunteers who assist with service coordination such as telephone reassurance, rides to medical appointments, and family respite and communicating with referring agencies.

Ms. Guajardo is familiar with the vocational rehabilitation program and the needs of individuals with disabilities. Ms. Guajardo’s membership would fulfill the composition requirement for a SILC Representative, and her vast experience would be an asset to the State Rehabilitation Council.

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