

March 24,2023

Joy A. San Buenaventura
Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawaii State Senator
District 2, Puna

Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura,

Mahalo for the honor of being nominated to serve on the State Rehabilitation Council. Please allow me to respond to your questionnaire, as follows:

- 1.) Why do you wish to be a member of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)?
My experience with employment for persons with disabilities, which includes CAP and community rehabilitation programs, advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, analysis of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's policies and procedures and collaborative skills, I believe, qualifies me to be a member of the SRC.
- 2.) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the State Rehabilitation Council?
I believe the role of a member of the SRC is to collaborate with all of its members proactively and professionally, with respect for each other. The responsibilities of a member include actively participating in all of its quarterly meetings and providing input to DVR ON ITS State Plan, consumer satisfaction survey, Federal compliance, legislative issues and committee assignments.
- 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 decision-making ability as a member of the State Rehabilitation Council? My career as an advocate at the Hawaii Disability Rights Center has included knowledge attained, specifically, about both Federal and State employment programs, my involvement in my agency's own federally funded programs, submitted required reports and advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities.
- 4.) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?
The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is in transition its Administrator has retired and, now, has an acting administrator. I hope to support the SRC Chair, Annette Tashiro and the acting administrator in helping to complete its requirements. I will also have a role in training new SRC members.
- 5.) Name three qualities tha best describe you and would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the State Rehabilitation Council?
I feel that my best qualities would be assertiveness, good listener and a sense of humor.
- 6.) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the State Rehabilitation Council.
As a CAP advocate, I had an experience where a hearings officer, who I had appealed my client being denied services, actually referred a client to me and I was successful in assisting the individual. Helping this individual took a great deal of patience and perseverance, which, I Believe, will benefit the SRC.

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

I do not see any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during my service on the SRC.
However, I would overcome any conflict of interest by providing full disclosure to the SRC.

Mahalo for the opportunity to answer the questionnaire and I would be happy to answer any additional questions by email at howard@hawaiidisabilityrights.org or by phone at 808-275-4006 (work) or 808-227-8428 (personal cell).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard Lesser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Howard Lesser, Senior Advocate

Hawaii Disability Rights Center

March 24,2023

Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 213
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: Testimony in support of GM 555 Nominating Howard Lesser for a term on the State Rehabilitation Council

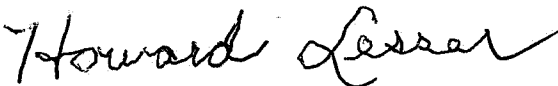
Madam Chair and Committee Members,

I am Howard Lesser and I am submitting this testimony in support of a term on the Hawaii State Rehabilitation Council, representing the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

I believe that my 26 years of experience as a strong advocate for persons with disabilities at the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, as well as my experience in employment-related programs, report-writing, and collaborations with state and non-profit agencies over my past 44 years living in Hawaii qualifies me for membership on the State Rehabilitation Council

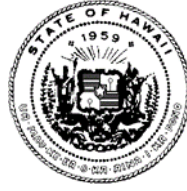
It is truly an honor to be nominated for this very important position and I thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard Lesser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Howard Lesser
801 South Street, #3609
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808-227-8428
howardlesser@ymail.com

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

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 555 – Relating to consideration and confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Howard Lesser, 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 Mr. Howard Lesser to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Governor's Message is to consider and confirm to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Howard Lesser, 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.

Mr. Lesser is seeking appointment to the SRC as a representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) per section 348-8(a)(2), Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Mr. Lesser has been a Senior Advocate at the Hawaii Disability Rights Center for over 20 years, assisting individuals with disabilities with questions or concerns about the Vocational

Rehabilitation (VR) program, process, and services. In addition, Mr. Lesser has served as the State Rehabilitation Council CAP representative. Thanks to his considerable knowledge of, and experience with the DVR program, he continues to be an asset and resource to the SRC and Hawaii's residents with disabilities.

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

GM-555

Submitted on: 3/26/2023 6:05:02 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/29/2023 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

On behalf of the Hawaii Disability Rights Center I am pleased to send in strong support for GM 555 nominating Howard Lesser for a term on the State Rehabilitation Council. Howard is one of our most senior advocates and is excellent in the position. He has served for many years with great distinction on the State Rehabilitation Council and has acquired great knowledge of the issues they address. He will be a tremendous asset to the Council going forward and we are pleased to offer our strong support.