

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 213  
Honolulu, HI 96813

April 8, 2023

Dear Senator San Buenaventura and the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Deborah Kobayakawa and I wish to continue being on the Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities in my role as an Oahu parent. I want to keep working with the Council to improve services, supports, and overall outcomes for individuals like my son with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I understand my role and the responsibilities that come with being on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities and take them seriously. I was honored to serve as the Chair for my first two years on the Council which helped me learn more about the legislative process and the Council's role during the legislative session.

I believe my thirty three years as a parent of a child with a disability qualifies me to be a parent member on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. My family has gone through many of the major systems of care in Hawaii from infancy to adulthood; I live this every day of my life. My lived experience is my biggest asset. In addition, my professional experience in special education, parent training, advocacy and parent support groups have all added to my experience and expertise.

During my next term of service on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities I hope to continue raising awareness about our adult I/DD population. I know parent voices help so I'm willing to use mine to help individuals like my son to have the life they want, with the people they love and that make them feel happy and safe. Sharing my individual story with others helps them understand the need for increased funding when we ask for it.

Three qualities that best describe me are: Passionate, Persistent, Positive, they have served me well in my role on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Most people would say it's my passion that makes me stand out; it's what drives me to continue working on improving outcomes for our I/DD population in Hawaii.

I do not foresee any possible conflict of interest arising as a result of my service on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. If one did arise then I'd immediately identify notify our Executive Administrator and address it to determine the most appropriate course of action.

In conclusion, it would be my honor to be appointed for another term on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, I can think of no better way for me to serve my community and our state. Thank for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Kobayakawa  
Windward Oahu Parent



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
1010 RICHARDS STREET, SUITE 122  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

April 10, 2023

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
The Thirty-Second Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawai'i  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator San Buenaventura and Committee Members:

**SUBJECT:** GM 665 – State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Gubernatorial Nominee Deborah Kobayakawa

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS GM 665** to confirm the nomination of Deborah Kobayakawa, for a second term to expire June 30, 2027.

The Council's Federal mandate (P.L.106-402 - DD Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000) is clear in determining the composition of this body to ensure that all the stakeholders are represented and engaged in the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of services and supports for individuals with Intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). The law ensures that all the players involved in the development, implementation, and use of developmental disability supports are represented. It specifically requires that not less than 60 percent of the membership of the Council be composed of individuals with an I/DD, parents, immediate relatives or guardians.

Mrs. Kobayakawa is the parent of a son with a developmental disability. Her reappointment to the Council fulfills the Federal requirement of parents serving on the Council. As a parent consultant and Co-Facilitator of parent support groups, she is an asset to the Council in navigating and understanding the DD system both within the DOE and DOH programs. Mrs. Kobayakawa worked as a special education teacher on Oahu for 11 years. Her professional experience working within the DOE system will continue to bring an invaluable perspective to the Council. Her expertise goes beyond professional as she is currently serving on our Council. She is well versed in lending a parent's perspective to pertinent discussions surrounding developmental disabilities.

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
GM 665  
April 10, 2023  
Page 2

The Council appreciates the opportunity to express our strong support for **GM 665** to reappoint Deborah Kobayakawa to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Daintry Bartoldus  
Executive Administrator

Kathryn Heath  
54-230 Hau'ula Hmstd. Rd.  
Hau'ula, HI 96717  
(808)-783-6443  
[hauulakat@gmail.com](mailto:hauulakat@gmail.com)

April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of the nomination of Deborah Koboyakawa for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Deb has been my friend for over a quarter century. We met teaching on the Big Island and bonded over working with students who had special challenges (she was doing her student teaching in Special Education and I was the ELL teacher). As we were both single mothers we found commonalities beyond the classroom and she and I have been friends ever since. Deb is one of the most devoted parents I have ever met. The care, love and work she has done to ensure that her younger, special son, Ian, would have a full, active working and personal life has been impressive, most especially because her son has just that as an adult. Ian is virtually independent as an adult and he certainly a happy man.

Equally impressive has been her work with special needs individuals, both within the Department of Education during her tenure with them, and beyond. Deb was always my first go-to person when I had questions regarding special education for any ELL student I had, and in turn she would ask me ELL questions; simply put our friendship has had great symbiosis. After leaving the DOE, Deb has run her own special needs advocacy business, Heart-to-Heart, which has really been tasks of advocacy, for not all have been able to 'pay' for her support. Deb is also duly proud of her work with Windward District – Kailua, to establish a parent support group for parents of autistic children.

In all the years I have know her, Deb has been constantly involved in groups and organizations (I could hardly hope to list them all, though Special Olympics and Goodwill Industries stand out in my mind) and is thoroughly devoted to the improvement of life and living conditions for special needs individuals. Deb always goes that one step beyond the necessary to ensure not only that information is shared with appropriate individuals, but also that appropriate actions and results occur. A classic example being her *schooling* of Hawaiian Airlines on special need support when her son was denied what he needed to travel independently. Certainly, when Deb is on a mission to ensure that the

rights of special needs individuals are both understood and met, she has no match.

Deb's own advocacy outreach company to support other parents who struggle with the various systems and agencies while seeking support for their own special individual, has given her knowledge of these matters a special depth and breadth. Her worth as an advocate, and as an ally is well known, and respected. Deb is well versed on the laws and rights of Special Individuals at both a national and state level, and she has worked hard to ensure these are met even in the difficult COVID times.

Deb has the drive, energy and determination to make positive changes occur. The state could not hope for a better representative on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities than Deborah Koboyakawa; and I endorse her for this role 100%. Should there be any questions or concerns surrounding her suitability for the position I am happy to respond, and intend on being at her side during her confirmation should such a need arise.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Heath  
Adjunct Professor Chaminade University