

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

3639

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 04 2024

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 606

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 606, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

G.M. No. 606 VALERIE KATO,
for a term to expire 12-07-2026,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Valerie Kato for service as the Deputy Director of the Department of Health.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Valerie Kato from the Governor; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Health; Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; Department of Budget and Finance; Department of Transportation; Department of Law Enforcement; Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; Department of Defense; Department of Agriculture; Department of Accounting and General Services; Department of Taxation; Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Executive Office on Aging; and eighty individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Kato's background and dedication to serving the public qualify



her to be appointed as the Deputy Director of the Department of Health.

Your Committee notes that Ms. Kato has been serving as the First Deputy Director for the Department of Health on an interim basis since July 2023. In her role, Ms. Kato manages and provides direction to various Department of Health offices and analyzes and develops internal administrative and procurement policies and procedures to ensure the Department efficiently meets its statutory and ethical obligations. Ms. Kato also leads budget preparation and supervises the management of facilities and the coordination of resources. Recently, Ms. Kato has been overseeing the provision of vital records requests for those on Maui who lost their records as a result of the August 2023 Maui wildfires. Prior to joining the Department of Health, Ms. Kato worked for the Department of the Attorney General in various roles, including as Deputy Attorney General for the Commerce and Economic Development Division, Covid Exemption Team, and Health Division. More recently, Ms. Kato served as First Deputy Attorney General and Supervising Deputy Attorney General for the Health Division where she provided legal services to the Department of Health. Prior to that, Ms. Kato worked as an associate attorney for fifteen years, focusing on commercial litigation, real property disputes, labor and employment law, probate and trust litigation, personal injury, and bankruptcy matters. Ms. Kato received her Juris Doctor from Georgetown University Law Center and has a Bachelor's degree in English from the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she graduated with honors. Ms. Kato is also an active member in her community and has served in multiple capacities with Hui Makaala, Hawaii United Okinawa Association, and Read to Me International.

Your Committee believes that Ms. Kato's extensive experience in diverse legal services, planning of policy and program development, knowledge of statutory and ethical requirements, alternative dispute resolution, and background working with the Department of Health will be assets for the Department and will help forge a more efficient administration. Your Committee further notes that Ms. Kato's personal statement expresses her goals to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department of Health's internal procurement processes to enable programs to timely procure goods and services, fill critical vacancies, improve services to the public, and improve the Department's facilities. Your Committee therefore recommends that Valerie Kato be appointed as Deputy Director of the Department of



Health based on her knowledge, background, and commitment to public service.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services 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 Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Second Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Health and Human Services
HHS
Advise and Consent

Governor's Message No.:* <i>GM 606</i>	Committee Referral: HHS	Date: <i>3/1/24</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision				
The Recommendation is:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advise and Consent 2340 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Advise and Consent 2345				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A. (C)	✓			
AQUINO, Henry J.C. (VC)	✓			
KEOHOKALOLE, Jarrett	✓			
SHIMABUKURO, Maile S.L.				✓
AWA, Brenton				✓
TOTAL	<i>3</i>			<i>2</i>
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: <i>[Signature]</i>				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

***Only one Governor's Message per Record of Votes**