

GM563 Victoria Kennedy

Questionnaire Form

(1) Why do you wish to be a member of the State Rehabilitation Council? Having been legally blind since 1978, and totally blind since 2000, I have been an advocate for those with disabilities, with particular focus on blindness, and firmly believe I could help those with disabilities see their potential.

(2) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the State Rehabilitation Council? There is so much that SRC is responsible for, but having been trained to cope with my disability, I feel that the combined efforts of all the Council members, in overseeing the many different programs, can help assure the state is working to help the most individuals possible.

(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 have been very active with so many worthwhile agencies that help those with severe visual impairment. I have been on the boards of several national and local organizations, and have a lot of experience in overseeing the implementation of carrying out their missions! The national boards were Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB), the largest guide dog school in North America, and the Northern California Affiliate of the Foundation Fighting Blindness. I am also currently on the board of the Hawaii Association of the Blind. I have chaired fundraising for GDB, the Northern California Affiliate of the Foundation Fighting Blindness, HAB, and also Hawaii Fi-Do Service Dogs. I am also very comfortable with public speaking about those things I am passionate about.

(4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service? I hope that my passion for the blind will help assure they are getting the best assistance they can receive.

(5) Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the State Rehabilitation Council? I am passionate, determined and a champion for the those with with disabilities. I feel all those qualities are important if one wants to truly help effect change.

(6) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the State Rehabilitation Council? When I was first diagnosed going blind, there was no readily available information and there were NO support groups whatsoever. I made it my personal mission to find out as much as I could, and became determined to help others struggling to trying to cope with their disabilities. I think any organization can always find ways to improve outreach so that more can be helped.

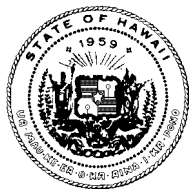
(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the State Rehabilitation Council? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest? I honestly cannot. However, if I did, I would simply recuse myself from any involvement in the matter.

I want to thank you so very much for considering my application.

Mahalo nui loa!

Vickie Kennedy

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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February 26, 2024

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

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

SUBJECT: **GM 563 – Relating to Consideration and Confirmation to the State Rehabilitation Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Victoria Kennedy, for a term to expire 06-30-2026.**

Hearing: February 28, 2024, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Videoconferencing, State Capitol

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

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

Ms. Kennedy is seeking her second term appointment to the SRC as a representative for Disability Advocacy Groups representing a cross-section of individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities, and parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves as described by section 348-8(a)(6), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). Ms. Kennedy is also a person with a

disability, thus satisfying the requirement of section 348-8(a) that “a majority of the council members shall be persons who have disabilities and are not employed by the vocational rehabilitation division of the department.”

Ms. Kennedy dedicated more than thirty years to advocating for individuals who are blind and visually impaired to live independently. Ms. Kennedy’s first-hand experiences with blindness, educating the public on individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and her work for the legitimacy of service animals equip her with the knowledge that will make her a continued asset as a member of the SRC.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Ms. Kennedy.