



**WAIANAЕ COAST
COMPREHENSIVE
HEALTH CENTER**

Aloha Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard, and members of the Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC), it is with great pride that we extend our **support** for the nomination of Shanda Lewis to the Hawaii State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus Commission (GM661). At WCCHC, we have strived to champion inclusivity and health equity, striving to provide care that acknowledges and celebrates the diversity within our community. Ms. Lewis's nomination resonates with our organizational commitment to serving all individuals with dignity and respect, particularly those from the LGBTQ+ community.

Ms. Lewis has demonstrated unwavering dedication to her profession, advocating for the LGBTQ+ community through both her clinical practice and personal engagement. Her initiatives in developing programs targeted at transgender, lesbian, bisexual, and gay patients have contributed to reducing healthcare disparities and improving access to gender-affirming care. As a member of the Hawaii DOH Sexual and Gender Minority Workgroup, she has showcased her leadership and deep understanding of the unique health needs within our community.

In alignment with the Commission's findings and purpose, Ms. Lewis's expertise and firsthand experience will be invaluable in advising on the formulation of equitable state government policies and initiatives. Her commitment to advocacy and policy reforms will serve Hawaii's LGBTQ+ population well. We are confident in her ability to contribute meaningfully to the Commission's mission.

Mahalo,

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Thirty-Second Legislature

Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 409

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Hearing: Friday April 12, 2024 at 9:30AM

**661 GM SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE HAWAI'I STATE
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, PLUS COMMISSION GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,
SHANDA LEWIS**

Aloha Senators Rhoads, Gabbard, Elefante, San Buenaventura, Awa, and Committee Members:

I am testifying in **SUPPORT** of Shanda Lewis' nomination to the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus Commission.

I have had the honor of working with Shanda for the past two years. Shanda was one of my first clinical preceptors at Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) at Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC), a Federally Qualified Health Center serving patients on Oahu's west side.

Shanda is a dynamic and impassioned advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and is the de facto expert at our organization on gender-affirming care. Not only does she provide this highly-specialized care to patients who would have difficulty accessing it otherwise, she also hosts in-service training for other clinicians within the organization so that primary care providers are better able to meet the needs of this population.

Shanda is a leader both within clinic and at an organizational level. She is the site director of the West Oahu Community Health Center site and has overseen a dramatic transformation of clinical operations since she assumed this role.

Further, Shanda responded to an immediate need upon the closing of the Lavender Clinic, a health facility that provided gender-affirming care to transgender patients. When met with the possibility of patients losing access to care, Shanda absorbed many of these patients as part of

her own panel at WCCHC. She consistently goes above and beyond in her provision of care to patients of the LGBTQ+ community and would serve as a tireless champion as a member of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus Commission.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

Johnathan Massey

MPH, MSN, FNP-BC, RN

GM-661

Submitted on: 4/10/2024 10:12:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/12/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and JDC Committee Members,

As a public health professional and member of the LGBTQ+ community in Hawai‘i, I write in unequivocal support of Shanda Lewis to become a member of the Hawai‘i State LGBTQ+ Commission.

I have had the honor to work with her on several important health and policy issues over the years, all of which aim to increase access to evidence-based care and to address the needs of our local LGBTQ+ people. As a healthcare provider on the West side of O‘ahu, Shanda identifies and addresses the ongoing health disparities experienced by her patients, especially those from the LGBTQ+ community. As such, she will bring an important voice to the commission, ensuring that the voices of her patients are not lost. In addition, she has been a longstanding member of the Hawai‘i Sexual and Gender Minority Workgroup, so she is also privy to the updates and the requests from community members on other islands and in other local communities.

I was heartened to hear of Shanda’s nomination because I feel that she will ensure that the health needs of our local LGBTQ+ people are uplifted and addressed. Given her community experience, clinical expertise, and unwavering compassion, I fully support her appointment to the LGBTQ+ Commission.

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

GM-661

Submitted on: 4/11/2024 7:22:39 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/12/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Pedersen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am submitting testimony in support of appointing Shanda Lewis to the to the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus committee.

I have worked with her professionally and personally for many years in direct health service provision and as also know her as a friend. Ms. Lewis has consistently been an advocate for access to services for all people in the state of Hawai'i, especially those who are part of the sexual and gender minority communities. She is knowledgeable, passionate, and strives to expand her skill set personally and professionally to improve conditions for people who deserve excellent health services and wider inclusion for improving their quality of life.

Over the past many years I have attended several training events with her and have been impressed by her continual expansion of her understanding and support of individuals and options they may have or wish to have for themselves. The opportunity to discuss and engage in deeper exploration of options with her led to expanded opportunities for many individuals and communities to receive individualized medical treatment. In her work on the west side of Oahu she has paid attention to critical issues of culture, medical science, and individual autonomy. She does not assume she knows what people may want, but takes the time to ask. In her personal life, she has embodied kindness, acceptance, and empowerment for all people she encounters. Ms Lewis gives of her time to those who need support to navigate our health systems and overcome addiction.

All of these qualities and her exceptional character make it a great pleasure to wholeheartedly recommend her appointment to this committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of appointing Shanda Lewis to this committee.

Renee Pedersen Rumler

Doctor of Medicine

Member of WPATH (World Professional Association of Transgender Health)

GM-661

Submitted on: 4/11/2024 12:07:22 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/12/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Mikhail	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and honorable members of the Hawai‘i Senate Judiciary Committee:

I’m writing today in STRONG SUPPORT of the confirmation of SHANDA LEWIS to the newly formed Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus Commission. My name is Stephanie Mikhail. I’m a transgender woman who has been living in Hawai‘i since 2010 and I’ve had the privilege of knowing Shanda for over 7 years in several different capacities.

I worked at The Lavender Clinic (TLC) from 2016 until we unfortunately had to close last year. Shanda and I met when she came to TLC to do a post-doctoral fellowship in gender-affirming care. Her dedication to learning as much as she could to help the most excluded patients was evident immediately as she chose to work her full time job at Waianae Comp and then dedicate one of her 2 days off per week to commuting from Kapolei to Makiki to work an 11-hour shift at TLC. Very quickly we learned we had as much to learn from Shanda as she had to learn from us.

Although she could only work at TLC one day per week she quickly became one of our most popular providers. She constantly pursued of knowledge and evidence in every area of wellness and the interactions between allopathic (for lack of better clarifications I’ll define “allopathic” as traditional Western Medicine primarily relying upon pharmaceutical and surgical interventions) interventions and lifestyle changes to offer patients holistic evidence-based advice on how to improve their overall health, but she could only achieve this nuanced and effective ability to advise by first listening to the needs and experiences of her patients and taking the time to understand how patients presenting with similar medical profiles could have vastly different health goals and external factors impacting which treatment plans were more likely to provide more success to each individual.

Working in healthcare is frustrating for most providers, but it is especially so when you target efforts to historically excluded populations. Shanda has always done what she can to work within the healthcare system to increase access to care, but she has also always recognized the need for the system itself to improve its treatment of all patients, especially those who have been more historically excluded from the conversations about health. As a member of The Lavender Clinic’s leadership, I’m still heartbroken at our failure to

continue the mission. I often ask myself if our Organization really improved the lives of any humans, especially gender minority and non-heteronormative patients. When I remember that part of our legacy is improving the knowledge and skill set of great providers like Shanda (and learning from her throughout and beyond her employment with us to improve our own standards of care when we were active) in those moments of reflection I feel better about The Lavender Clinic's legacy.

I advocated both as an individual and as a leader of The Lavender Clinic for the creation of this commission, although I still disagree with the State's insistence on requiring unpaid labor from commissioners who serve on this and similar commissions, especially as commissions such as this one and the Commission on the Status of Women and others which have been formed to advise the Legislature on the needs of historically excluded populations. I realize that issue is not the issue in question today, so I will restrain myself from further comment on the issue of compensation. Still, even with this practical barrier of no compensation, and my philosophical disagreement with the idea of the State ever demanding of a person labor without compensation, I considered volunteering my efforts for service on this commission. I was careful in my consideration to never express it publicly until now, because I wanted to know where I stood on the question before exposing myself to any external influences. Ultimately I decided that with the recent closure of TLC and the work of the legal dissolution still in progress, I need time and space for myself, and not only would it not be fair to myself to jump right back into advocacy work, but it wouldn't be fair to my community because I am not in a good place mentally to do the frustrating, heart-breaking, thankless, often seemingly futile work of beating the same drum over and over and only getting tiny incremental changes over glacial timescales while the majority of my community continues to suffer. Seeing Shanda's name on the list of nominees gives me a tiny glimmer of hope that maybe her ability to look at evidence, coupled with her ability to listen to diverse perspectives will help this commission be empowered to influence substantive policy changes.

Since I'm unable to serve on this commission at this time, I'm excited to have Shanda there. I know of no other individual living in Hawai'i today who could be a better advocate for my community. If I had been in a position to volunteer, and if she and I could both have passed the hurdles of nomination and confirmation, then I would've been extremely proud and excited to serve with her.

I was privileged to have the trust of many people in my community for a time. It was a responsibility I took very seriously. I'm testifying today only in my own capacity representing only my own voice, but I'm offering my full-throated endorsement of Shanda's ability and character to serve on this commission.

Thank you.

