

April 1, 2024

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

Aloha Senator San Buenaventura:

Re: Nomination to the Disability and Communication Access Board

Thank you for your letter of March 14, 2024, which I received today.

Here are my written statements that address your questions:

(1) Why do you wish to be a member of the Disability and Communication Access Board? I am nearing the end of my current term on June 30. I was encouraged to reapply, and am happy to do so. I believe I have been a productive member of the Board and have contributed positively to its work.

(2) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the Disability and Communication Access Board? I know that the Board has been a positive force for advocating for access in the community. It advocates for persons with disabilities and their families. It educates the public about issues that affect us all as well as makes our state aware of current and upcoming national trends.

(3) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Disability and Communication Access Board, 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 Disability and Communication Access Board. I have had fifty years of educating staff and the public about employment and discrimination laws. I have investigated cases of discrimination and have recommended changes and disciplinary actions. I have drafted, made recommendations on, and testified for and against proposed legislation.

(4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service? Working with my colleagues on the Board and in the community, I hope we may continue to improve access for persons with disabilities and the wider community.

(5) Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the Disability and Communication Access Board? I think I am a curious person with wide ranging interests. I have worked to bring people together and worked to collaborate with others.

(6) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the Disability and Communication Access Board? I have created educational tools and presentations that have been used to train and orient staff and other agencies. They have been included as training and onboarding modules for several public health agencies and have been presented at state and county agencies, federal agencies and public health and medical associations. I have edited several publications.

(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the Disability and Communication Access Board? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest? No, I do not.

Mahalo for this opportunity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerald Ohta', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gerald Ohta



STATE HEALTH PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

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Senate Committee on Health and Human Services Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and Committee Members

GM 677, Gubernatorial Nominee to the Disability and Communication Access Board

Testimony of John C. (Jack) Lewin, M.D. SHPDA Administrator

Wednesday, April 3, 2024
1:00 p.m.

1 **Agency's Position:** The State Health Planning and Development Agency supports the
2 nomination and confirmation of Gerald Ohta to the Disability and Communication Access
3 Board.

4 **Fiscal Implications:** None

5 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose is for the consideration and confirmation to the
6 Disability and Communication Access Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, Gerald Ohta.

7 Mr. Gerald Ohta is a treasure and long-standing contributor to public health, health
8 equity and affirmative action.

9 He served as the Affirmative Action Officer as an employee with an outstanding career
10 for many years in the Hawai'i Department of Health. He served admirably for all eight (8)
11 years when I was Director of Health from 1986 to 1994 and has been a respected friend since
12 then.

13 He has been an outstanding and respected member of the Disability and
14 Communication Access Board and fully deserves another term to effectively represent citizens
15 with disabilities and to advocate for their well-being and fair treatment.

- 1 I endorse him without reservation and with great respect and appreciation.
- 2 Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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April 3, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Governor's Message 677 – Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Disability and Communication Access Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, Gerald Ohta, for a Term to Expire June 30, 2028

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) strongly supports the nomination of Mr. Gerald Ohta to our Board for a second term to expire on June 30, 2028.

The Board is a statewide Governor-appointed Board with a majority of its members being persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full inclusion, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society.

DCAB is mandated to have members that include individuals knowledgeable in areas for which the Board has rulemaking authority. Mr. Ohta is a valuable asset to the Board as he has served as the Department of Health's EEO/AAO Officer, ADA Coordinator, and he brings a wealth of knowledge on disability issues as it relates to programs and services accessibility, communication access, accessible parking, employment discrimination, and other areas that impact persons with disabilities. Mr. Ohta currently serves on the Board's Standing Committees on Parking and Transportation.

Mr. Ohta is an individual who uses a mobility device and would continue to serve on the Board as an individual with a disability.

Thank you for your positive consideration of Mr. Ohta to serve on the Board for a second term.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director

GM-677

Submitted on: 3/29/2024 8:26:41 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the appointment of Gerald Ohta (GM677) to the Disability and Communication Access Board. I had the pleasure of working with Gerald when I was with the Department of Health. Gerald was always professional and knowledgeable in the performance of his duties. He would go out of his way to help others. When I was with the City and County of Honolulu, I also had the opportunity to attend his workshops. The workshops were always filled with facts that were easy to understand and implement.

He will be an asset to the Disability and Communication Access Board. Please confirm his appointment.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

GM-677

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 10:21:57 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlotte Townsend	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support Gerald Ohta's nomination to the Disability and Communication Access Board. His dedication and service is valued and appreciated. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
Charlotte Townsend