

Testimony of the Board of Public Accountancy

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection
Friday, March 1, 2024
9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 229 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
G.M. 515, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE BOARD OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, ISABELLA GARY,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2027**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Hector West, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawaii Board of Public Accountancy (Board). The Board Ms. Isabella Gary's appointment to the Board as a public member.

Since her interim appointment on July 28, 2023, Ms. Gary attended two of the three scheduled Board meetings. As a public member for the Board, Ms. Gary is able to provide a different perspective from the industry members.

Ms. Gary is currently the Chief Operating Officer (COO) with the Ko'olauloa Health Center (KHC) and for over ten years has also held various other positions at KHC, including Director of Transformation & Utilization and Quality Improvement Officer.

Ms. Gary's experience at KHC makes her a good candidate to serve as a public member on the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Friday, March 1, 2024; 9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229
Via Videoconference**

RE: GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 0515, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, ISABELLA GARY, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2027.

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Hirokawa and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Primary Care Association, a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** the confirmation of ISABELLA GARY to the State Board of Nursing for a term to expire on June 30, 2027.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

The HPCA has long held that the social determinants of health – more than any other factor – contribute to the overall wellbeing of our people. Persons who experience homelessness, language barriers, and poverty are more likely to suffer persistent, chronic health issues, and have shorter life expectancies than those who do not.

We believe that Ms. Gary's impeccable credentials, steadfast dedication and tireless commitment to furthering the health and wellbeing for all of Hawaii's communities make her uniquely qualified for the position on the State Board of Public Accountancy. As demonstrated throughout her career, Ms. Gary fully understands the importance of socio-economic equity in the pursuit of optimal health outcomes for all our citizens.

For these reasons, the HPCA urges your confirmation of the nomination of ISABELLA GARY for the State Board of Public Accountancy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (808) 791-7830 or rhirokawa@hawaiiPCA.net.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

G.M. 515-Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the State Board of Public Accountancy, Gubernatorial Nominee, ISABELLA GARY, for a term to expire 06-30-2027.

Good morning, Chair Keohokalole, Vice-Chair Fukunaga and Members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:

My name is Terrence Aratani and I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of confirming Isabella Gary to the Board for the foregoing reasons.

I am the Chief Executive Officer Ko`olauloa Health Center on the North Shore of O`ahu. I have had the privilege of leading our health center for the past nine years. During this tenure, I have had the distinct pleasure of observing Ms. Gary's professional journey, from her serving as our care coordinator to being an assistant to our Chief Operations Officer. It is with immense pride that I highlight her remarkable achievement of earning an M.B.A. during this time, a testament to her dedication and commitment to personal and professional growth.

From the outset, Ms. Gary's exemplary work ethic, dedication, and genuine concern for both our staff and patients have consistently left a profound impression on me. Her tireless efforts to ensure the successful completion of tasks, coupled with her innate ability to foster a positive and collaborative work environment, have undeniably set her apart as an indispensable asset to our organization.

In recognition of her exceptional performance and remarkable leadership abilities, I had the distinct honor of appointing Ms. Gary to Chief Operations Officer in 2018. Since assuming this position, she has spearheaded numerous transformative initiatives aimed at enhancing our operational efficiency and effectiveness. Her unwavering commitment to excellence and relentless pursuit of innovation continue to yield tangible benefits for our organization and all stakeholders involved.

Drawing upon my own experiences as a former public member on the Board of Public Accountancy, I am aware of the responsibilities and considerations associated with this esteemed position. Throughout my tenure, I consistently prioritized the broader public interest in all deliberations and decisions undertaken by the Board. Recognizing the invaluable perspective and expertise that Ms. Gary possesses, I took the initiative to discuss the possibility of her assuming the role of a public member upon my imminent departure. I believe that her background, coupled with her dedication to serving the public good, will enable her to make invaluable contributions to the Board's mission and objectives.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support Ms. Gary's nomination to the Board of Public Accountancy.

Thank you.