

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 3:54:16 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chris Tabb	Testifying for Sensory Travel, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Jeanne Torres for the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. Jeanne's contributions to pedestrians who are blind and low vision are too numerous to list individually; as a summary, she is committed to providing programs that help young people develop skills to be able to travel safely and independently in their communities. She understands the unique travel needs of individuals with disabilities, especially those who are non-visual travelers who cannot access typical, visual information for determining the location of safe routes. Jeanne works to collaborate with others to create positive change in communities. I encourage you to accept the nomination of Jeanne Torres to the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee so that she can continue to share her expertise and passion in helping young people develop skills they will use throughout their lives, both for their independence and their physical health and well being.

Respectfully,

Chris Tabb

Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist

Sensory Travel, LLC

## GM602 Testimony

I am writing to support the nomination of JEANNE TORRES, to serve on the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. Jeanne Torres would be an effective member of the Committee, with her experience in advocating and providing positive outcomes for individuals with blindness and visual impairments.

As a DOE Special Education Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (VI Teacher) and a Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist (COMS), I have known Jeanne Torres for over 15 years, in her incredible work as the Executive Director at Guide Dogs of Hawaii and previously as the General Manager at Eye of the Pacific Guide Dogs.

For decades, Jeanne Torres has been a steadfast advocate for improving the lives of individuals with visual impairments and blindness. Ms. Torres has built a successful non-profit organization that has made a significant impact to the blind community, from youth to seniors. Jeanne Torres is a true leader: she listens to individual and community needs, inspires others to work towards common goals, and is action-oriented.

As a VI teacher and COMS, I have witnessed the impact Jeanne Torres' programs have made in our youths' lives. Ms. Torres' programs at Guide Dogs of Hawaii (GDH) have helped our students access their education and their community. With their Get Ahead with Technology grant, children with visual impairments with and without additional disabilities receive assistive technology — from cause-and-effect multi-sensory educational toys and tablets to electronic braille note-takers, computers with screen readers, refreshable braille devices, and GPS devices for the blind. This access to assistive technology levels the playing field for our students so that they are able to reach their full potential. GDH offers programs during school breaks: day activities and week-long camps. During these programs our youth with visual impairments are able to come together with their peers, to socialize, build their O&M skills, engage in recreational skills, gain confidence, and learn skills to become independent.

Jeanne Torres has developed programs to enhance safe travel for people with visual impairments. GDH provides individual and group orientation & mobility activities taught by Orientation & Mobility Specialists, so that children and adults gain the skills to navigate safely in their homes, school, work and community. Jeanne Torres also offers O&M workshops to advance Orientation & Mobility Specialists' knowledge, so that we can best teach O&M techniques for safe travel.

Jeanne Torres masterfully partners with youth and their families, adults, VI teachers, O&M Specialists, organizations, and community members to enhance the quality of lives for children and adults with blindness. Please consider and confirm Jeanne Torres to serve on the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee.

Respectfully,  
Jeannie Camacho  
Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments  
Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 8:25:29 AM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Carpenter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Senators,

I am writing to express my strong support for the nomination of Jeanne Torres to the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. As a service provider working with students who are blind and visually impaired, I am acutely aware of the challenges they face when traveling to and from school. These challenges include heavy traffic, poor visibility, and intersections lacking Audible Pedestrian Signals.

Jeanne Torres has consistently demonstrated her commitment to promoting safety within our community. Her organized and systematic approach supports learning opportunities statewide. She is not only a problem solver but also a dedicated advocate for students, families, and professionals. Jeanne actively raises awareness about accessibility barriers, engaging in meaningful discussions with stakeholders to foster teamwork and find solutions.

Critical factors in pedestrian safety include access to public transportation, well-marked crosswalks, and clear signage. Jeanne's expertise will be invaluable in addressing these issues and ensuring the safety of pedestrians, especially our keiki of varying ages and abilities.

I wholeheartedly endorse Jeanne Torres as a valuable asset to the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee.

Mahalo,

Brian Carpenter

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 2:32:19 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Victoria Cozloff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Jeanne Torres has been a dedicated advocate for the blind for the past 24+ years. She continues to strive to improve the safety of the blind. Being on this Committee will give her a voice to help achieve this goal. As a dedicated volunteer, I feel she will be an asset to the Advisory Committee.

Victoria Cozloff

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 7:59:57 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amy Downard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Senators,

I would like to submit this written testimony in support of nominating Jeanne Torres onto the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. As a service provider to students who are blind and visually impaired, I am constantly aware of the challenges students, families and school staff experience to get to and from school sites safely along areas with heavy traffic, poor visibility and traffic intersections without Audible Pedestrian Signals. Throughout our state there are varying degrees of challenges and solutions.

Jeanne Torres has proven to be a trusted resource to promote safety in our community statewide, supporting learning opportunities in a organized, systematic way. She is a problem solver and community advocate to students, families and professionals. She brings awareness to accessibility barriers to businesses, schools, transportation offices and the general public. She listens to stakeholders with meaningful and ongoing discussions to promote team building and problem solving.

Access to public transportation, providing clearly marked crosswalks and signage, and ensuring adequate intersection crossing times are all major factors in keeping all of our pedestrians safe, especially our keiki of varying ages and abilities.

I give Jeanne Torres my highest support possible to bring awareness, thorough examination and creative solutions as a member of the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. She will be an incredible asset.

Mahalo,

Amy Downard  
Instructor for the Blind  
Honolulu, Hawaii

April 4, 2024  
3:00 PM  
Conference Room 224  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

**Testimony in Support of GM 602**

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Scott Enright and I am writing in strong support of the appointment of Jeanne Torres to the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. I have worked with Ms. Torres for many years in her capacity as Executive Director for Guide Dogs of Hawaii. Through my work with her she has demonstrated that she is determined, hard working, and tenacious in her pursuit in her objectives; these characteristics will serve the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee in the State of Hawaii well.

Again, I am in strong support of this confirmation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Enright". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Scott Enright

Ms. Trudy Fernandez  
91-1370A Karayan Street  
Ewa Beach, HI 96706

April 3, 2024

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, President  
and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-Second Legislature  
Hawai`i State Capitol  
Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

Dear President Kouchi and Members of the Senate,

Re: Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee

This letter serves as support of Jeanne Torres to serve on the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee.

I have known Ms. Torres for many years through her work with Guide Dogs of Hawai`i and can attest to the fact that she has long been a tireless advocate for the blind and visually impaired population in the state of Hawai`i.

Ms. Torres, a blind individual herself, works determinedly to help every blind and visually impaired person understand the importance of safe travels through accessibility training, and orientation and mobility instruction. Her daily work and experience provides many with the tools needed to lead independent, confident lives.

With this, I humbly ask you to consider the nomination and confirmation of Jeanne Torres to the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. I am certain that Ms. Torres's knowledge and experience, will be an invaluable asset.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

/s/ Trudy Fernandez

Trudy Fernandez

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 4:51:14 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tehani Lopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

My name is Tehani Lopes, and I am writing this testimony in support of Jeanne Torres. I have worked under Jeanne for the last 8 years at Guide Dogs of Hawaii. It is my opinion that she would be a great addition to the Safe Routes to School advisory committee. She is an active part and advocate for the blind community. I think she can offer valuable insight on making things safer and inclusive for people with disabilities.

Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely,

Tehani Lopes



April 3, 2024

Dear Honorable Senators,

I am excited to learn that Jeanne Torres has been nominated for the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. Jeanne Torres is a leader in the field of Orientation and Mobility, a profession which focuses on instructing individuals who are blind or visually impaired with safe and effective travel through their environment. As the Director of Guide Dogs of Hawaii, she is a leader in the community of blind and visually impaired students and adults.

I have been fortunate to be a part of her team and provide individualized instruction to students and adults in the State of Hawaii. Without hesitation, Jeanne Torres initiates services and safety for those in need. In addition to being a leader, Jeanne Torres is a glowing example of an efficient blind traveler that contributes to the community. She understands the nuances of providing safe and efficient routes for everyone in the community, such as Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) in urban and rural areas.

I support Jeanne Torres' nomination and her advocacy and leadership skills!

Thank you,

Sherri Martinez

Instructor of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Ewa Beach, Hawaii

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 7:42:23 AM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Margaret McGrath-Carlson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom it may concern:

I fully support nominee Jeanne Torres for the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. As a teacher of the blind on the Big Island, I have seen firsthand how dangerous some school routes, and intersections in those routes, can be for students with visual impairments.

We need safer ways for blind students, and blind students with other disabilities, to travel to and from school independently.

Jeanne is passionate about this topic and I feel that she has student safety as her primary priority.

Jeanne will be a wonderful collaborator!

I urge you to select her for this role.

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 12:22:03 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ron Nagasawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of Jeanne Lujan Torres to serve on the Safe Crossing Route To School Advisory Committee and ask she be confirmed. I've had the pleasure of serving on the board of Guide Dogs of Hawaii for which Jeanne serves as its Executive Director. This organization is the advocate for the blind and visually impaired with a robust program serving students. No safe crossing program would be complete without inclusion of these students and their specific needs. Jeanne's experience will be highly valuable to the advisory committee. She is a shining example of selfless service. Thank you for your consideration.

Ron Nagasawa

[rnagasawa@midweek.com](mailto:rnagasawa@midweek.com)

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 2:15:57 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joy Nakata-Muranaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Joy Nakata-Muranaka, I am in support of Jeanne Torres for the Safe Crossing route to school Advisory committee.

Jeanne as the executive director for guide dogs of Hawai'i has exhibited clear and understandable thinking. She has developed guide dogs of Hawai'i from an organization that only used to provide guide dogs for visually impaired or blind individuals to an organization which now provides services to students, young adults and seniors; she also started support groups to parents of these students.

Thank you, Joy Nakata-Muranaka

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 7:09:27 AM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sandra Robles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Jeanne Torres being on the board to improve safety concerns for students and people with visual impairments. She has been a great advocate for the population I serve and she will continue to do great things in the future. It has been a struggle for some of our students to travel within their own community due to some of the walking routes on the Big Island.

**GM-602**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 11:21:29 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/4/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chloe Rose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

I am writing in support to nominate Jeanne Torres, the esteemed head of Guide Dogs of Hawaii, for the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand Jeanne's unwavering commitment to enhancing the lives of blind and visually impaired citizens of Hawaii through her exemplary leadership and dedication to service.

As the head of Guide Dogs of Hawaii, Jeanne Torres has demonstrated exceptional leadership in providing vital services, training, events, and assistive technology to individuals within our community who are blind or visually impaired. Her organization plays a crucial role in promoting independence, mobility, and inclusion among this population, empowering them to navigate the world with confidence.

Jeanne's passion for advocating for the needs of blind and visually impaired individuals is evident in her tireless efforts to promote accessibility and safety, particularly concerning routes. She recognizes the importance of ensuring that all students and adults, regardless of their visual abilities, have access to safe and efficient routes to school, work and their daily needs. Her expertise in this area, coupled with her dedication to fostering inclusive environments, makes her an invaluable asset to the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee.

Furthermore, Jeanne's collaborative spirit and ability to forge meaningful partnerships within the community have been instrumental in advancing the mission of Guide Dogs of Hawaii. She has cultivated strong relationships with local schools, government agencies, and advocacy groups, working collaboratively to address the unique needs of blind and visually impaired individuals and promote greater accessibility throughout our neighborhoods.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse Jeanne Torres's nomination to the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. Her leadership, advocacy, and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of blind and visually impaired citizens make her exceptionally qualified to contribute valuable insights and perspectives to the committee's important work. I am confident that her expertise and dedication will greatly benefit the committee and further its mission of promoting safe and accessible routes to school for all students.

Thank you for considering Jeanne Torres's nomination.

Sincerely,

Chloe Rose

Kapolei, HI

**LATE**

Dear Honorable Senators,

It is my pleasure to submit this written testimony in support of Jeannie Torres for the Safe Routes to School advisory Committee. As a teacher for the visually impaired and a Certified Orientation and Mobility instructor I see the needs and challenges that the blind and low vision face to travel safely along streets, crosswalks. Access to travel is often frustrating and can be a frightening experience for many of our students and clients.

Jeannie Torres is someone that understands the challenges and needs that our clients face. She is dedicated and hard working. She understood the need for Hawaii to have safe and accessible passageways for our blind and low vision community. Her passion for leading the Guide Dogs organization to provide the blind and low vision community shows in the clients happiness and willingness to participate in the community.

Jeannie Torres has my highest recommendation for the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. The committee will prosper with her as a member.

Mahalo,

Nancy Parker  
Teacher of the Visually Impaired  
Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist