

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2006

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 25 2025

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 789

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 789, submitting for study and consideration the appointment of:

CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT (ISLAND OF O'AHU)

G.M. No. 789 TARYN R. TOMASA GIFFORD
for a term to expire in 10 years,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Taryn R. Tomasa Gifford for service on the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, Island of O'ahu.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the appointment of Taryn R. Tomasa Gifford from the Office of the Public Defender, Hawai'i Women Lawyers, and forty-three individuals.

Your Committee received comments on the appointment of Taryn R. Tomasa Gifford from the Hawaii State Bar Association.

The Hawaii State Bar Association Board of Directors (HSBA Board) uses a rating system that considers several criteria to assist the HSBA Board in making a recommendation to your Committee on whether the appointee is "qualified" or "not qualified". Specifically, the criteria the HSBA Board employs is the same criteria found in the American Bar Association's Guidelines for Reviewing Qualifications of Candidates for State Judicial Office. Those guidelines include the following criteria, which are not



exclusive: integrity, diligence, legal knowledge and ability, professional experience, temperament, financial responsibility, public service, and ability to perform the responsibilities and duties required of the position for which the applicant has been appointed. Upon review of the established criteria, the HSBA Board found the appointee to be qualified for the position of Circuit Court Judge in the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, Island of O'ahu.

Ms. Tomasa Gifford attended the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and graduated with honors. She received her Juris Doctor from the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and received a CALI award for Excellence for the Future Award for Intellectual Property. Ms. Tomasa Gifford has been licensed to practice law in the State of Hawai'i since 1998.

Since 2003, Ms. Tomasa Gifford has worked at the Office of the Public Defender. Ms. Tomasa Gifford currently works as a supervising attorney, where she oversees and trains attorneys and staff in the district court and appellate sections. She is also a member of the Office's legislative team, where she edits and submits written comments and testifies on proposed legislation. Ms. Tomasa Gifford is actively involved in the Office's hiring, discipline, and termination proceedings, and provides legal representation for indigent individuals in trial and specialty courts, where she has cases at both the trial and appellate levels. Before working at the Office of the Public Defender, Ms. Tomasa Gifford was a law clerk for Judge John S.W. Lim, while he was a circuit court judge and then an appellate court judge. Prior to becoming a lawyer, Ms. Tomasa Gifford worked as a Paralegal and Advocate for AmeriCorps. During her time with AmeriCorps, Ms. Tomasa Gifford assisted with preparing pleadings for divorcees, conducted client intake interviews, assisted with office management and case assignments, and worked in conjunction with the First Circuit Court's Adult Services Branch, domestic violence family shelters, Domestic Violence Clearinghouse (now known as the Domestic Violence Action Center), and the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i to assist victims of domestic violence.

Testimony submitted in support of Ms. Tomasa Gifford's appointment commends her tenacity, commitment, and ability to quickly learn. Testimony further indicates that she has demonstrated an immense dedication to her work, and her



confidence, professional accomplishments, humility, and dedication to public service speak volumes about her character.

Your Committee finds that, based on the testimony submitted on her behalf, responses to questions asked by the members of your Committee, and your Committee's review of information about her and her qualifications, Taryn R. Tomasa Gifford has the knowledge, dedication, and other competencies to be a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit, Island of O'ahu, and possesses the legal expertise and integrity to fully and faithfully discharge the duties associated with that judicial office.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the appointee, has found the appointee to be qualified for the position to which appointed and recommends that the Senate consent to the appointment.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Judiciary
JDC
Consent

Gov. Msg./Jud. Com. No.:* <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">GM 789</div>	Committee Referral: <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">JDC</div>	Date: <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">4/24/25</div>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision				
The Recommendation is: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"><div style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent 2347</div><div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Not Consent 2349</div></div>				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
RHOADS, Karl (C)	✓			
GABBARD, Mike (VC)				✓
CHANG, Stanley	✓			
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A.	✓			
AWA, Brenton				✓
TOTAL	3			2
Recommendation: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted<div style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted</div></div>				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive; margin-top: 10px;">[Signature]</div>				
Distribution: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"><div>Original File with Committee Report</div><div>Yellow Clerk's Office</div><div>Pink Drafting Agency</div><div>Goldenrod Committee File Copy</div></div>				

***Only one Message/Communication per Record of Votes**