



VOYAGER PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Hawai'i State Senate Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the nomination of Ms. Melissa Sotelo to the Commission on the Status of Women. As someone who has had the privilege of knowing Melissa for over three years, I can confidently say that she is exceptionally qualified to serve in this important role. Her extensive experience, commitment to healthcare, leadership abilities, and dedication to her community make her an invaluable asset to the Commission.

Melissa brings a wealth of expertise to the table. With nine years of nursing experience, she has developed a deep understanding of women's healthcare needs across Hawaii's diverse populations. Her background as a nurse navigator and clinic nurse for a breast oncologist has allowed her to provide crucial support to women facing complex health journeys, equipping her with insights that are both compassionate and informed. This experience, coupled with her current studies as a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Family Nurse Practitioner student specializing in women's health, positions her at the forefront of emerging best practices in women's healthcare. Her academic and clinical pursuits ensure that her knowledge is always current, further strengthening her ability to contribute effectively to the Commission's work.

In addition to her clinical work, Melissa is a faculty member at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, where she teaches and mentors the next generation of nurses. Her role at the university allows her to stay engaged with the latest healthcare policy trends and education strategies relevant to women's health. Melissa's leadership in education is reflected in her service on various hospital education committees, where she has been a driving force in improving healthcare standards and practices for all patients, particularly women.

Melissa's critical care expertise gives her a unique perspective on acute healthcare needs and system responses, which would be invaluable to the Commission when considering policy recommendations for improving healthcare services for women across Hawai'i. She is passionate about ensuring that all women, regardless of background or circumstances, receive the high-quality care and support they deserve.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Melissa is deeply committed to her local community. She is actively engaged in efforts to preserve and honor the 'āina, and she continually works to deepen her understanding of Hawaiian culture. As an educator in Hawai'i for over two decades, I know firsthand the importance of being both a lifelong learner and an active participant in the local community. Melissa embodies these qualities, and her dedication to learning and community engagement will undoubtedly inform her work on the Commission.

For all these reasons, I strongly support Ms. Melissa Sotelo's nomination to the Commission on the Status of Women. I am confident that her diverse expertise, leadership, and commitment to improving the lives of women in Hawai'i will make her an invaluable member of the Commission.

Thank you for considering her nomination.

Sincerely,

Wrayna Zavala
Assistant Principal
Voyager Public Charter School

Statement of Support of Mrs. Melissa D. Sotelo
Before the Committee on JDC
Hearing Date: 4/3/25 10:05
Submitted by: Aaron B. Ramirez, UH Mānoa-UHWO Nursing Student

Aloha e Members of the Committee on JDC,

My name is Aaron Ramirez. I am honored to submit this letter in strong support of Melissa D. Sotelo's nomination to serve on the Commission on the Status of Women in Hawai'i.

As a former student of Mrs. Sotelo, I had the privilege of learning from a nurse educator whose passion for advocacy and empowerment extended far beyond the classroom. She is a fierce advocate for the advancement of her students, constantly encouraging us to rise to our full potential and think critically about our role in our communities and the healthcare system. Her dedication to mentorship, wealth of experience, and ability to connect with others on a deeply human level made her one of the most impactful instructors I have had the honor of learning from.

Mrs. Sotelo has always exemplified what it means to lead with purpose. Her decision to step into this role comes from a sincere belief that change does not happen by chance but through action, collaboration, and commitment. Her passion for women's health and the advancement of women and her drive to be a change agent make her an optimal candidate for this commission. I do not doubt that she will bring the same level of insight, compassion, and integrity to this work as she has brought to her students' lives.

Mrs. Sotelo understands the systemic issues affecting women in healthcare, education, safety, employment, and representation. She inspires those around her and works diligently to uplift others. I am confident that she will contribute thoughtfully to identifying effective strategies and creating meaningful outcomes for the women of Hawai'i.

I recommend Mrs. Sotelo for this appointment with great enthusiasm. Her voice, experience, and vision are needed at this pivotal time of uncertainty for the rights and future of women's health.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I am happy to provide any further insights on how Mrs. Sotelo has shaped my journey as a future healthcare provider.

Mahalo nui,
Aaron B. Ramirez
aaronbr@hawaii.edu

GM-689

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 12:34:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/3/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina S Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is a pleasure to submit a testimony for our daughter Melissa Davis Sotelo for consideration to this Commission on the Status of Women. Melissa will be an asset to this commission because she brings many strengths to the table.

She is very motivated to assist and educate in her job as a Nurse Educator at the University of Hawai'i.

She has a strong focus on excellence and compassionate care in her jobs as well as a clinical nurse.

She is a hard worker in both clinical settings as a nurse, as well as educator. She is also a full time student in the Doctorate program for her degree in Nursing Practice.

As a retired critical care nurse I am so proud of her motivation to work with you in this capacity as an advocate for women in your state, as well as her commitment to her students and patients. I believe she will be an educated voice for the needs and considerations of women.

Sincerely, Christina and Joseph Davis

GM-689

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 5:15:59 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/3/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melinda S. Lynch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Melinda Lynch
Portland, OR

March 31, 2025

To the Hawai'i State Senate and to whom it may concern,

I am writing to give my support to the nomination of Melissa Sotelo to the Commission on Status of Women in Hawai'i. Melissa is not only my cousin, but also a life long friend. I have witnessed her overcome loss and economic hardship with the added challenge of being without higher education. Out of hard times emerged a resilient and focused woman.

With the support of her family, Melissa had an opportunity to reach for a career as a Registered Nurse, following in the steps of her mother and her aunt before her. Now, she has pushed on towards her last year in her Physician Assistant studies. We are so proud of her!

Her journey in healthcare has opened the doors of both personal independence and advocacy for others. Nursing is caring for people in the most fundamental way. There is deep meaning in this vocation and Melissa has found her calling as a teacher of future nurses at the University of Hawai'i West Oahu campus. There she has made it a point to urge the students toward not only becoming nurses, but looking further towards Physicians Assistant training. Melissa has more than once shared with me how gratifying is her work with the students in the program; how meaningful she finds helping new nurses pursue their full potential and give back to their own Hawaiian communities with their successes -- similar to how she has discovered her own gifts via healthcare.

Melissa's achievements are already leaving a mark on the future wherever she directs her attention. Now just imagine what she can achieve as a member of the Commission on Status of Women in Hawai'i.

Thank you,
Melinda Sotelo Lynch



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene
Department of Nursing

Ke Kulanui o Hawai'i ma Mānoa

April 1, 2025

Hawaii State Senate Committee

Re: Nomination of Ms. Melissa Sotelo to the Commission on the Status of Women

Hearing date: 4/3/2025

Dear Members of the Committee on JDC,

I am writing to convey my strong support for the consideration and confirmation of Ms. Melissa Sotelo to the Commission on the Status of Women. Melissa is a colleague and peer at the University of Hawaii at Manoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, which is the leading nursing education institution in the state. I feel she will serve as a pivotal member of this commission due to her experience and expertise within health care education and practice.

Ms. Sotelo has been an RN since 2016 and received a graduate degree specializing in nursing education in 2021. Her main focal area has been in intensive care nursing, both as a practicing nurse as well as an educator at Concordia University St. Paul in Oregon and then at UH Manoa since August 2024. Through this work, she has demonstrated a commitment to equity and fair treatment for all people, crucial components that are needed within a Commission such as this. She's been involved at UH Manoa in creating inclusive educational spaces and supporting students to be the best they can be as they prepare to become part of the nursing workforce in Hawaii.

I strongly support consideration of Ms. Melissa Sotelo to join the Commission on the Status of Women and feel she'd be a vital asset to the work moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Molly Altman".

Molly Altman, PhD, CNM, MPH
Associate Professor and PhD Program Director
mollyalt@hawaii.edu

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