



## GM671

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE ISLAND BURIAL COUNCIL, ISLAND OF O‘AHU, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, CHARISH MILLER, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

March 6, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Room Number 224

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** GM671, which would confirm Charish Miller for appointment to the O‘ahu Island Burial Council (OIBC). Ms. Miller applied for the OIBC through OHA as part of our 2024 IBC recruitment process. After internal vetting of candidates, the top respective candidates for respective IBCs were provided to the full OHA Board of Trustees (BOT) for approval on January 23, 2025. Approved candidates were then submitted to the Office of the Governor on January 28, 2025.

OHA is the constitutionally established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians.<sup>1</sup> As part of our constitutional and statutory mandate, OHA has been intimately involved with historic preservation related advocacy for decades and is granted specific kuleana under the Hawai‘i Historic Preservation law, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 6E, and implementing regulations.<sup>2</sup> Per HRS 6E-43.5, the Governor must select at least two appointees on each IBC from OHA’s list of nominees.

Charish Miller is the co-founder and President of Aloha Mortuary, and has been involved in the mortuary business for the past 6 years. She has specialized in disinterment under license, and upholds both professional and cultural values in her work. Her family is deeply rooted in Kuli‘ou‘ou and Waimanalo, and actively strives for a legacy of stewardship in these areas. Ms. Miller is also a founding Board Member of Alaula Life Foundation Hawai‘i, a non-profit education focused organization.

For these reasons, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** GM671, to confirm Charish Miller to the OIBC. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>1</sup> Haw. Const. Art. XII Sec.5

<sup>2</sup> See HRS 6E-3, 43, -43.5, 43.6; and, HAR 13-284-6(c) and HAR 13-275-6(c).

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA**

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**DAWN N.S. CHANG**  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

**RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE**  
FIRST DEPUTY

**CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**Thursday, March 6, 2025  
1:00 PM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference**

**In consideration of  
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 671  
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE ISLAND BURIAL  
COUNCIL, ISLAND OF O'AHU, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,  
CHARISH MILLER, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6/30/2029.**

**The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports Governor's Message 671, nominating Ms. Charish Miller to the Island Burial Council, Island of O'ahu, expiring June 30, 2029.**

The Island Burial Councils are established under Section 6E-43.5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes. The Councils determine whether to preserve in place or relocate previously identified native Hawaiian burials site, recognize lineal and cultural descendants, and provide counsel and advise to the Department. With the exception of the Moloka'i Island Burial Council, the island burial councils consist of no more than nine members, of which six representatives shall represent a specific geographic area, and no more than three shall be representatives of development and large landowner interests. Ms. Miller is seeking to represent the Ko'olaupoko geographic area.

Charish Miller has genealogical ties to Kuli'ou'ou and Waimānalo in the Ko'olaupoko district. Her connection to these 'āina provides her with knowledge, cultural grounding, and dedication to protecting iwi kūpuna and makes her an asset to the communities she represents.

Ms. Miller's upbringing was deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture, instilling in her the values of 'ohana, aloha 'āina, and mālama and her commitment to protecting iwi kūpuna reflects these strong cultural foundations and traditions. With six years of experience in working with burial sites and ancestral remains

in the mortuary setting, she has ensured that iwi and their mana are treated with the utmost respect. Ms. Miller navigates both cultural protocols and legal protections to advocate for the preservation of iwi kūpuna.

Senate confirmation will ensure that Ms. Miller's familiarity in consulting with 'ohana on burial treatment plans and ensuring compliance to protect burial sites contribute to the O'ahu Island Burial Council until June 30, 2029.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this nominee.