



The Senate Ka 'Aha Kenekoa

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 18th, 2025

Aloha Mark Augustine:

Congratulations on your nomination to the Commission on Fatherhood. To assist the Hawaii State Senate with its confirmation process, we request that you submit the following information to our office no later than March 24th, 2025, to ensure that we proceed in a timely manner:

1. **Why do you wish to be a member of the Commission on Fatherhood.**

I seek to become a member of the **Commission on Fatherhood** because I believe in being part of the solution—not just in words, but through action on a **statewide, influential platform**. Fathers play a critical role in the strength and stability of families, yet too many feel unheard, unseen, and unsupported.

I want to **bridge that gap**, ensuring that fathers who may not believe they have a voice are empowered to find one. I will stand as their advocate, championing their needs, concerns, and contributions—both in legislative spaces and within our communities.

Fatherhood is not just a personal responsibility; it is a societal foundation. When we uplift fathers, we strengthen families, and when we strengthen families, we build a brighter future for all. I am ready to serve, to listen, and to lead in this mission.

2. **What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the Commission on Fatherhood?**

As a member of the **Commission on Fatherhood**, I see my role as both a **champion for fathers** and a **bridge for stronger family connections**. My responsibilities could include:

- **Promoting Healthy Family Relationships** – Emphasizing the vital role fathers play in their families and ensuring they have the support needed to foster strong, loving relationships.
- **Advocating for Fathers** – Addressing issues that impact fathers both in legislative matters and in everyday life, ensuring their voices are heard and their challenges recognized.

- **Recognizing and Supporting Fathers** – Uplifting and celebrating fathers who are committed to their families while providing resources and encouragement to those in need.
- **Engaging Fathers Across Maui County** – Creating meaningful opportunities for connection, learning, and growth for fathers in **Maui, Moloka‘i, and Lāna‘i**, ensuring all fathers—regardless of location—have access to support and community.

Fatherhood is a powerful responsibility, and I am committed to ensuring that every father feels valued, supported, and empowered to lead with love and purpose.

3. **Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities as a member of the Commission on Fatherhood, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, and knowledge that would aid you as a member of the board.**

I believe I am well-qualified for this position because of my firsthand experience as a father and my dedication to supporting families. Being a father of four for the past fourteen years has given me a deep understanding of the challenges fathers face—whether in navigating parental responsibilities, strengthening family bonds, or seeking guidance during difficult times.

One of my mentors taught me the importance of service: to truly help others, you must first understand their needs and then find ways to meet them. I have carried this principle throughout my work, including my time at the Service League in San Mateo, CA, where I assisted men in transitional housing from county jail. There, I advocated for fathers by making calls on their behalf, particularly those dealing with child support issues who were unable to advocate for themselves.

Currently, I work with Maui Family Support Services, where I help families build stronger relationships by identifying risk factors and reinforcing protective factors for children. Through this work, I have gained experience in non-violent mediation, a needs-based approach that requires deep listening, empathy, and conflict-resolution skills. This practice has been instrumental in helping families navigate difficult situations and develop healthier dynamics.

My ability to listen, understand, and advocate for fathers makes me a strong candidate for this position. I am committed to ensuring that fathers in our community have the resources and support they need to thrive.

4. **What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?**

Supporting Fathers, Strengthening Families

In Maui County, fathers deserve access to resources—both time-honored and newly available—that empower them to reunite with their children and families when needed. Every father facing this journey should know that support exists to help them navigate the path toward healing and reconnection.

For solo fathers, maintaining stability and fulfilling their responsibilities is vital. They should never feel like they have to shoulder this burden alone. That’s why we must encourage fathers to come together, to meet at least four times a year, to stand side by side in solidarity, and to remind one another that fatherhood is not a road meant to be traveled alone.

Above all, we must guide and uplift fathers—teaching them not just through words, but through action—how to be respectful, responsible, and accountable. To have integrity, to be honest, and nurturing partners, and to serve as role models within our communities. When fathers thrive, families grow stronger, and our entire community benefits.

Reimagining Fatherhood: A Space for Strength and Renewal

I want to bring self-care awareness to fathers because too many are carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders, stressed to the max with nowhere to release it. But what if their greatest outlet wasn’t just a solo escape—but their own families? What if, instead of feeling isolated, fathers had a dedicated space to recharge, reconnect, and grow stronger alongside their loved ones?

Imagine a free county gym on every island—a place where fathers and families could go not just to exercise, but to access resources, find support, and channel stress and anger into something productive and healing. A space built not just for physical strength, but for emotional and mental well-being. A place where fatherhood is honored, where families bond, and where the cycle of stress is replaced with resilience, connection, and empowerment.

It may sound ambitious—but why not? Strong fathers create strong families. Strong families build strong communities. And when we invest in spaces for fathers to thrive, we invest in a future where no father has to struggle alone.

Let’s dream boldly—because this is possible. This is our/my mission. This is our/my commitment. Together, we will ensure that no father feels unseen, unheard, or unsupported.

5. Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will the Commission on Fatherhood.

Resilient. Steadfast. Dedicated. These are not just words; they are the qualities I believe every leader in this role must embody. I fully understand the complexities and challenges that come with this position, as well as the aspirations I hold for it.

Change—whether in policies, laws, or societal mindsets—takes time. Progress is not always immediate, and setbacks are inevitable. That is why I must remain steadfast in my commitment, ready to face opposition and navigate obstacles with unwavering resolve. I must be resilient, undeterred by closed doors or the word "no." And above all, I must be dedicated—through every challenge, in the face of any storm—because fathers deserve to be heard, to be seen, and to be recognized as vital pillars of their families. This is the mission. This is the responsibility. And I am ready to carry it forward.

6. Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a member.

The Power of Working Together: A Lesson from the Imu

A few months ago, I had the privilege of standing alongside fathers and families at an **Imu** during a one-night campout. We had a shared purpose—to prepare food to raise money for a paddling club. But as the night unfolded, it became clear that this experience was about much more than just cooking.

From the moment I arrived, I saw fathers stepping up in different ways—some in the kitchen, carefully preparing and wrapping the pork, while others were outside, digging and building the fire pit, placing large stones to create the foundation for the Imu. Each of us had a role to play, a **Kuleana**, to ensure everything was ready. When it was time, we covered the pit, making sure no smoke escaped, and working in unison toward a common goal.

As we waited through the night and into the early morning, something even more meaningful happened. We talked story. Fathers shared how they build bonds with their children, and how they create a culture of strength and connection within their families and communities. The fire wasn't just cooking the food—it was igniting conversations about fatherhood, responsibility, and the power of working together.

I know our chair would like to see more events like this—opportunities for fathers and families to come together, strengthen their ties, and support one another. I can help make that happen. I love bringing people together, rallying the troops, and staying connected to what our community needs. Because when families stand together, when fathers lead with purpose, we create something far greater than a meal—we build a legacy of strength, unity, and resilience.

7. **Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Commission on Fatherhood? How would you overcome conflicts of interest?** I don't foresee a conflict of interest that could arise. If one does come up, I would address the chair about the conflict and ask next steps.

Please be aware that testimony submitted to committees – including your responses to the above questions - is posted on the Legislature's website; you may wish to remind individuals who intend to submit testimony on your behalf of the public nature of the testimony.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Here is the link to your nomination on the State Capitol website:
[Measure Status Details for GM 716](#)

Mahalo,

Amelia Dudley
Office Manager
Office of Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 213
Honolulu, HI 96813
808-586-6890
a.dudley@capitol.hawaii.gov

Letter of Interest



Growing up without my biological mother or father had its challenges, to say the least. I remember being a bitter and angry child. It was like I was in a dream state, lost without guidance and direction. I felt ashamed and embarrassed about not having a father. These challenges shaped my ideas about fatherhood.

When I was young, my father would write and send gifts on holidays and birthdays. The letters and gifts were precious to me and I remember them to this day. To me, it meant he did at least think about me. I longed and looked forward to the letters and gifts each and every birthday and holiday. It was the only link I had with my father. It was a way I could feel connected to him and get his attention. Tragically, my father died when I was 10 years old. His death brought an end to the letters and gifts, as well as the connection I felt to him. Although I was sad that my father had passed away, I also felt a sense of relief. I no longer had to feel ashamed and embarrassed about not having a father. He wasn't around because he was dead not because he didn't want me.

Growing up without my father in my life warped my mindset of what a father was and left me with little to no guidance for when I was to be a father. I had a lot of fear about being a good father. Could I be the father I never had? Could I stick around instead of leaving like my father did? My desire to be a father wavered between not doing it out of fear and doing it even though I was afraid.

I sought out father figures and role models to learn from. I found them in my sports, school, and church communities. I learned a lot of amazing things. The values and lessons I learned gave me the ability to forgive my father for not being there for me. Once I was truly able to forgive my father, I was ready to get married and start a family. Being born into this situation I decided I had two options. I could follow in his footsteps or I could use this as an opportunity to be a better father.

Today, I am married to an amazing woman. I get to know and love each day. I am a father of five, two daughters, two sons, and one baby in heaven.

Being a father has allowed me to understand my father a bit more. He did not have the support he needed in order to successfully be my father. Men need support in order to properly lead a family. They need guidance and opportunities to grow.

I want to advocate for fathers here on Maui that need support. I want to be a voice where they don't have a voice. I stand on the foundation that fathers are extremely important in the family unit.

Becoming a commissioner aligns with my purpose and passion to help fathers be their best. It will allow me to support programs to guide them to their full potential as they navigate their 'Ohana.

I'm currently working at Maui Family Support Services with the Pōhai Kāko'o 'Ohana parent skills-building workshop, as the program supervisor. I work with parents with children ages 9-17 to help build their parent/child relationship as well as prevent the children from using drugs and alcohol.



Maui Family Support Services, Inc.

Strengthening Children and Families in Maui County since 1980!

Chief Executive Officer:
Edeluisa Baguio-Larena

Board of Directors:

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Michael E. Kim, MD

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**Administrative Office & Early Head Start
Kupukupu Child Development Center:**
1844 Wili Pa Loop
Wailuku, HI 96793
Phone: (808) 242-0900 Fax: (808) 249-2800

MFSS 'Elua Office at the J.W. Cameron Center
95 Mahalani Street, Bldg. 5 Suite 19-B
Wailuku, HI 96793
Phone: (808) 793-2816 Fax: (808) 868-4113

EHS Child Development Center: - Lahaina
15 Ipu Aumakua Lane
Lahaina, HI 96761
Phone: (808) 661-1170 Fax: (808) 661-1198

EHS Child Development Center: - Waiale
67 Waiale Road
Wailuku, HI 96793
Phone: (808) 242-7849

**Hale Hi'ipoi -
Hana Infant and Toddler Center:**
4111 Hana Hwy/P.O. Box 938
Hana, HI 96713
Phone: (808) 248-7609

**Maui County Early Childhood
Resource Center:**
2099 Wells Street
Wailuku, HI 96793
Phone: (808) 242-1608 Fax: (808) 270-5556

Moloka'i Office:
107 B Ala Malama Ave./P.O. Box 1658
Kaunakakai, HI 96748
Phone: (808) 553-5114 Fax: (808) 553-8115

Lana'i Office:
730 Lana'i Ave. #109
P.O. Box 631043
Lanai City, HI 96763
Phone: (808) 565-7484
Fax: (808) 565-7484*15

April 4, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, President
And Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, HI 96814

Dear President Kouchi and Members of the Senate:

It is with great enthusiasm that I recommend **Mark Augustine** for appointment to the **Hawai'i Commission on Fatherhood**.

Mark currently serves as the **Program Supervisor for the Pōhai Kāko'o 'Ohana Program at Maui Family Support Services, Inc.** In this role, he has demonstrated a deep commitment to supporting families, particularly in empowering fathers to be present, engaged, and confident in their parenting journeys.

Through his leadership, Mark has guided program staff in delivering culturally responsive, trauma-informed services that strengthen the bonds between parents and children. He has a talent for building meaningful relationships within the community and is passionate about uplifting fathers, especially those navigating challenges such as substance use recovery or reentry into family life.

Mark's dedication to fatherhood advocacy, along with his personal and professional insights, make him a valuable asset to the Commission. His ability to listen with compassion, lead with integrity, and inspire hope in others reflects the very mission of the Hawai'i Commission on Fatherhood.

I am confident that Mark will contribute greatly to advancing policies and programs that support fathers and families throughout our state.

Please feel free to contact me should you need additional information.

Warmest regards,

Edeluisa Baguio-Larena, MA
Chief Executive Officer



GM-716

Submitted on: 4/4/2025 2:55:45 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Brown	Testifying for Maui Family Support Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of Mark Augustine to be confirmed to the Commission on Fatherhood. Mr. Augustine is a colleague of mine at Maui Family Support Services. The program that I supervise at the agency works with families who have been disrupted by Child Welfare involvement sometimes leading to removal of children from their biological parents. Mr. Augustine has participated at our Family Days/Group Connections as well as sitting on our Parent Advisory Committee. At the Family Days he has been a facilitator and was able to involve parents in the process of making social connections. At the Parent Advisory Committee meetings, Mark has been vocal and supportive using active listening skills to support fathers AND mothers in the struggles of their journey. I have also sat on the very first cohort for the current program he supervises, which is aimed at helping parents differently understand and respond to teenagers and their experiences. His enthusiasm and strength-based style is admirable and respected. I strongly recommend and support that you consider the confirmation of Mr. Augustine



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Mark's dedication to fatherhood advocacy, along with his personal and professional insights, make him a valuable asset to the Commission. His ability to listen with compassion, lead with integrity, and inspire hope in others reflects the very mission of the Hawai'i Commission on Fatherhood.

I am confident that Mark will contribute greatly to advancing policies and programs that support fathers and families throughout our state.

Please feel free to contact me should you need additional information.

Warmest regards,

Edeluisa Baguio-Larena, MA
Chief Executive Officer



GM-716

Submitted on: 4/3/2025 9:32:35 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara S Augustine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mark Augustine is an outstanding candidate for the Commission of Fatherhood. His commitment as a father of four is evident in his daily actions, and his journey as a parent has been both inspiring and transformative. As his wife, I have had the privilege of witnessing his growth and dedication firsthand, which has reinforced my belief in his capabilities as a leader whom both our children and I admire and respect.

Exemplary Parental Involvement

Mark is not only a faithful and supportive father but also an exceptional listener. He is deeply invested in all the activities our children participate in, ensuring that he is present and engaged in their lives. His ability to balance active involvement with attentive listening has made him an indispensable part of our family.

A Heart for Helping Fathers

Mark's passion extends beyond his own family. He possesses a genuine desire to support other fathers by addressing their needs and challenges. His vision includes recognizing fathers for their hard work and providing them with the support they need. Mark understands the trials and burdens many fathers face and is dedicated to helping them navigate their paths with empathy and guidance.

Vision for the Commission of Fatherhood

Mark envisions a world where fathers are celebrated and supported, and he is committed to making this vision a reality through his work with the Commission of Fatherhood. His dedication, compassion, and leadership qualities make him an ideal candidate for this role. I wholeheartedly endorse Mark Augustine for the Commission of Fatherhood, confident that he will make a positive impact on fathers and families everywhere.

GM-716

Submitted on: 4/4/2025 8:17:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom it may concern, Mark Augustine is an excellent candidate for The Commissioner of Fathers for Maui. Mark is a caring and loving father, husband, brother, nephew and son. He has always cared for others and he is someone I can go to for advice and spiritual counseling. He is a man of his word and he has a heart for others. He has always been someone I could turn to in an emotional crisis. He loves his wife and kids and is an example to his family of what a father should be. He is kind, caring and fun. His children love and cherish him. He also has excellent communication skills. He is trust worthy and he is one of my confidants. I know that he will make an excellent Commissioner of Fathers! Maui would be blessed to have him!

Thank you,

Renita Drake

****Testimony for Mark Augustine – Commissioner on Fatherhood****

Bill 716 GM

Committee; HHS

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great enthusiasm and confidence that I wholeheartedly endorse my nephew, Mark Augustine, for the position of Commissioner on Fatherhood. Mark's lifelong dedication to mentorship, family, and community service makes him an exemplary candidate for this role.

Mark's journey as a father, leader, and advocate is deeply rooted in his faith and commitment to uplifting others. Raised in the church, he has always been surrounded by strong Christian values, which he now embodies as a devoted husband and father of four beautiful children. Despite growing up without a father in the home, Mark turned his experiences into a powerful testimony of resilience and grace, leaning on his faith and the guidance of spiritual mentors. His unwavering belief in God's guidance has shaped him into the compassionate and intentional father he is today.

I've had the privilege of watching Mark grow into the remarkable man he is now. Even as a teenager, his determination and leadership were evident. I remember watching him play baseball at the park—focused, dedicated, and striving to be the best player he could be. He was competitive, but what stood out was his discipline and the skill to back it up. Those same qualities now define his approach to fatherhood and community service.

Professionally, Mark's career reflects his passion for building relationships, nurturing growth, and serving others. As a Program Supervisor at Maui Family Support Services, he oversees programs that strengthen families and communities, ensuring quality care and measurable outcomes. His leadership roles in security, education, and community management further highlight his ability to mentor, problem-solve, and create safe, supportive environments—skills directly transferable to championing fatherhood initiatives.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Mark's heart for mentorship shines through his service as a youth leader in the church. He has served as a mentor, advisor, and advocate for young people, guiding them with wisdom and empathy. His children are a testament to his devotion; they thrive under his love, attention, and the enriching experiences he provides whether through spiritual growth, outdoor adventures in Hawaii, or simply his steadfast presence.

Mark's unique blend of personal experience, professional expertise, and spiritual grounding equips him to inspire and support fathers from all walks of life. He understands the challenges of fatherhood, the power of community, and the transformative impact of faith. His life mission to build and repair relationships aligns perfectly with the goals of the Commission on Fatherhood.

Without reservation, I believe Mark Augustine will bring vision, empathy, and actionable leadership to this role. He is not just a great father; he is a beacon of hope for families and a living example of how faith, perseverance, and love can redefine fatherhood for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Darrell C. Hunte, Uncle

April 6, 2025

GM-716

Submitted on: 4/6/2025 6:40:59 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandon Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to offer my wholehearted recommendation for my friend and former colleague, Mark Augustine. Over the years, Mark and I have worked together in a wide range of capacities—including youth programs, coaching, the waste management industry, and installing batteries at the Maui solar plant. Across every setting, Mark has stood out as someone who leads with integrity, compassion, and a deep commitment to both his work and his community.

Mark is not only a trusted colleague, he is also family. He’s like an uncle to my kids, and I’ve been honored to hold the same role in his children’s lives. He is deeply devoted to raising children well and supporting strong, healthy families—not just his own, but those in the communities he serves. Whether mentoring young people, guiding a team, or putting in hard physical work, Mark consistently shows up with heart, humility, and a can-do attitude.

Professionally, Mark brings reliability, skill, and a strong sense of purpose to every task. He’s someone who takes pride in a job well done and is always willing to go the extra mile for his team. Personally, he’s a grounded, generous, and deeply trustworthy individual—exactly the kind of person you want in your corner, on your crew, or in your community.

I have no doubt that Mark Augustine will be a valuable asset to any organization or team he joins. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you’d like to speak further about his strengths and character.

Brandon Ching

Tour Manager-Hawaii Tours

808-280-5590

GM-716

Submitted on: 4/5/2025 5:46:35 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Paranada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing a testimony on Mark Augustine. I have been working with Mark for the past year. He has a great personality, very humble, easy to get along with, caring towards others, a wonderful Dad and husband. Mark is family oriented and supports his wife in home schooling their 4 beautiful children. He should be awarded the Commissioner on Fatherhood. His role as a Dad extends to his neighborhood families as they often go to his house and hang out with them. Mark is a great father figure to many in the community as he exemplifies his love and care for not only his children but for other families and their children. Always helping out when needed. He has what it takes to be an awesome Dad. His funny, innovative, down to earth nature, makes him well liked and easily approachable on a daily basis. Although Mark works a full time job, he always has time for family meetings, get togethers, and attending his children's sports/activities. I know Mark will hold his position as Commissioner on Fatherhood well. He's intelligent, responsible, respectful, and has a caring heart. Family is important and in today's world there's lots of "brokenness" in the families. Mark's family and moral values are very important in this position of Fatherhood.

Sincerely,

Patty Paranada

GM-716

Submitted on: 4/4/2025 4:38:03 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabriel Crane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislature,

Mark Augustine is an excellent candidate for the Commission on Fatherhood, and should be confirmed to this position for the benefit of the citizens of Hawaii.

I have been lucky to witness Mark's profound care and dedication to the cause of fatherhood as a peer through the Kane Connections program here on Maui, in his work at Maui Family Support Services, and as a close personal friend. Mark has been unbelievably kind and generous to my own family as we have gone through hardship and changes, and has extended himself as a role model to my own son. He has inspired me as a father, and together our family has experienced the wonderful earnestness and love that his beautiful family of six shares with one another and the world.

Mark exhibits strong clarity of mind, dedication of heart, and clear professional skill and abilities. In the community, and in his work, he is a tireless advocate for family wellness and health, and the integral role men play in healthy families and society. To me, the honesty, openness, and integrity with which he conducts himself shows that he is the right person for this job. His values are the values that fathers deserve to be modeled in the public space.

Please confirm Mark so that the fathers and families of Hawaii can benefit.

Mahalo,
Gabriel Sodetani Crane
resident, Kahului, Maui