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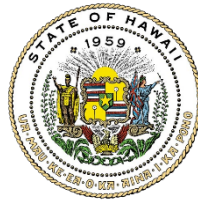
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April 10, 2025

GM 737: Consideration and Confirmation of Gubernatorial Nominee Setsuko Gormley to the Defender Council

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **strongly supports the confirmation of Setsuko Gormley to the Defender Council.**

The Defender Council is the five-member body of Governor's appointees who serves as the "governing body of the office of the state public defender."¹ Members of the Defender Council are not compensated and participate as a service to the OPD and the community. The most important role of the Defender Council is the appointment of the Public Defender.² Currently there are only two active members on the Defender Council (Chair Crystal Glendon and Member Setsuko Gormley). In addition to appointing the Public Defender, the Defender Council is also involved in the management of the Office of the Public Defender (OPD) and provides counsel and assistance to the employees of the OPD. Due to the lack of quorum, the Defender Council has been unable to hold a meeting since last year. Therefore, the appointment of new members is important to the functioning and management of the OPD.

Ms. Gormley is highly qualified to serve as a member of the Defender Council. The role of Defender Council member is time-consuming and takes members away from their work and personal obligations. Ms. Gormley is a current Defender Council member who has generously agreed to submit her nomination for a second term. Ms. Gormley is currently in private practice on Maui with a focus on the areas of criminal defense, family law and immigration. Most relevant to her Defender Council nomination, Ms. Gormley was a Deputy Public Defender (DPD) with the Maui Branch of the OPD from 2008 to 2012. It is important that the members of the Defender Council understand the OPD and its mission

¹ HRS § 802-9 (1993).

² HRS § 802-11 (1993).

but also the specific challenges that are faced by attorneys in the OPD. Ms. Gormley will be able to lend her experience as a Defender Council member and DPD and her specific experience as a DPD in the Maui Branch to her role as a Defender Council member. Ms. Gormley's continued service as a Defender Council member will also provide continuity and guidance to the Defender Council. The OPD strongly supports the confirmation of Setsuko Gormley to the Defender Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

GM-737

Submitted on: 4/7/2025 6:10:03 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/11/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melody Rolnick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of Setsuko Gormley's confirmation to the Defender Council.

Ms. Gormley is a highly competent and principled attorney. In my experience, she demonstrates professionalism, integrity, and meticulous attention to detail in her practice. I trust she will bring the same level of diligence and ethical standards to her role on the Defender Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Melody Rolnick



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April 8, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
State of Hawaii Senate
State Capitol, Room
Honolulu, Hawaii
96813

Aloha Senator Rhoads:

I'm a defense attorney on Maui and was a Public Defender for over 18 years. I was the Supervising Attorney for 14.5 years and had the pleasure of supervising Setsuko Gina Gormley.

I'm writing to enthusiastically support Ms. Gormley's nomination to the Defender Council. She was an asset to our office while there. She is conscientious and hard working. She handled all requested tasks efficiently and effectively. She was extremely easy to work with and performed over and above my expectations.

Ms. Gormley's work ethic is sound, she's a "go-getter," a self-starter and can be relied upon to do very good and thorough work. She is also a team player and helped to improve group morale. She is honest and I trust her wholeheartedly.

Since being in private practice for the last eight years, I've worked with Ms. Gormley on Co-defendant cases and have observed her in court and out of it. She's still doing excellent work. She will bring her prior experience as a PD to the Council and will have the Office's best interests at heart. She is an excellent candidate for the Council.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please call me at **808-242-1999**. The best time to reach me is between 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. My email is wendyHUDSONLAW@gmail.com.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wendy A. Hudson'.

Wendy A. Hudson

GM-737

Submitted on: 4/9/2025 3:19:54 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/11/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allan J. ALMEIDA, Jr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senator Karl Rhoads,

The purpose of this letter is to express my support for Setsuko Gormley's confirmation to the Defender Council.

Ms. Gormley demonstrates an impeccable work ethic and a resolute approach to her legal practice. As a diligent and thorough attorney, she is committed to seeing every case through to its conclusion with the utmost professionalism and dedication.

Her commitment to justice is further evidenced by her staunch advocacy for the Hawaii Innocence Project and her diligent work on behalf of Mr. Gordon Cordeiro, highlighting her deep understanding of the legal system and dedication to fair and equitable outcomes.

Having worked within the legal community for many years, I can confidently attest to Ms. Gormley's exceptional abilities as an attorney. Should I ever require legal representation for a serious matter, Ms. Gormley would be my first choice.

I firmly believe that Ms. Gormley's extensive experience, unwavering commitment to justice, and exceptional work ethic make her an invaluable asset to the Defender Council. I urge the Senate Committee on Judiciary to give her nomination favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

Allan J. Almeida, Jr.

Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii

GM-737

Submitted on: 4/9/2025 6:54:50 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/11/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sat Freedman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support Setsuko Gormley's re-appointment to the Defender Council. As a former public defender, she's intimately familiar with our office and the challenges our deputies face.

Thank you,

Sat Freedman

THE LAW OFFICE OF BENJAMIN E. LOWENTHAL

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Email: benjamin@bellawyer.com

April 9, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads
Committee on the Judiciary

Re: GM 737 – Letter supporting Setsuko Gormley

Dear Senator Rhoads,

I have spent formative years, both as a public defender and as a private practitioner, on Maui. I have seen Ms. Gormley's strong work ethic, devotion to the rule of law, and advocating strongly for her clients. I believe she wants what is best for the Office of the Public Defender, the attorneys there, and most importantly, the clients. She is an ideal pick to represent Maui on the Defender Counsel.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Benjamin Lowenthal

Benjamin E. Lowenthal

JAMES S. TABE

P.O. BOX 893846, MILILANI, HAWAII 96789
E-MAIL: JAMES.S.TABE@GMAIL.COM

April 11, 2025

GM 737: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Defender Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Setsuko Gormley, for a term to expire 06-30-2027

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

I fully support the confirmation of Setsuko Gormley for a second term on the Defender Council. As a former state public defender and who had worked closely with her and with the Defender Council, I am confident that Ms. Gormley, if confirmed, will continue to assist the Office of the Public Defender in fulfilling their mission of zealous and effective representation of indigent persons charged with criminal offenses.

After graduating from the University of Southern California, she obtained her law degree from the Thomas M. Cooley Law School of Western Michigan University. Following her graduation from law school, she served as a law clerk to the Honorable Shackley R. Raffetto, and the Honorable Joseph E. Cardoza, both of the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit. Ms. Gormley then joined the Office of the Public Defender. As a deputy public defender on Oahu and on Maui, she has practiced at every level in the judicial system: the circuit courts, the district courts, the family courts, and the appellate courts. Since entering the private practice of law, she is specializing in criminal defense, family law and immigration.

Because of her extensive experience, Ms. Gormley understands the criminal justice system thoroughly and the Office of the Public Defender's essential role in that system. The Office of the Public Defender would be privileged to have Ms. Gormley continue to serve on the Defender Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on this matter.