

Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection
Thursday, April 10, 2025
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
G.M. 751, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE HAWAII MEDICAL BOARD,
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, GARY BELCHER,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-2029**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chelsea Fukunaga, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawaii Medical Board (Board). The Board supports the confirmation of Gary Belcher's reappointment to the Board.

Mr. Belcher is being reappointed to the Board as a public member. Mr. Belcher has previously served twice as a public member on the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology, including serving as vice chair. A seasoned Board member, Mr. Belcher currently serves as the Board's vice chair and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from both his professional background and his prior terms serving on a Board. His zeal for public service is evident in his dedication and reliability in preparing for and attending the Board's meetings, gaining the trust and respect of his fellow Board members.

As a public member, Mr. Belcher provides valuable a perspective and insight, helping to ensure that the Board remains fair and objective in its deliberations. He fully understands his role as a public member and actively participates in meetings, oftentimes acting as a facilitator for robust discussions. Mr. Belcher is well prepared for meetings and is not afraid to ask questions when issues are unclear.

The Board believes that Mr. Belcher's interest in serving on the Board, prior administrative experience, and desire to contribute to the community will continue to enhance the effectiveness of the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

April 3, 2025

Honorable Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 205
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: GM 751
Gary Belcher, M.Ed.
Consideration for Second Term on Hawaii Medical Board
Term to Expire 06-30-2029**

Dear Honorable Senator Keohokalole and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:

Thank you for the opportunity to present a written statement for your consideration **in strong support of Mr. Gary Belcher's confirmation** to the Hawaii Medical Board as a public member.

By way of brief background, I am the current chair of the Hawaii Medical Board, which had been statutorily established to ensure public safety in matters of State licensure and regulation. In this role, I have had the opportunity to work alongside Mr. Belcher during his first term on the Hawaii Medical Board, and I therefore believe that I am in good position to speak to the qualities that make him well-suited to continue to serve the public on this Board.

First of all, Mr. Belcher had been involved with graduate medical education for innumerable years, and is well-versed in matters of accreditation, as it pertains to training programs that resident physician trainees must complete in order to be eligible for Board certification in the various medical disciplines. To this end, he is also familiar with licensure requirements, as even resident physician trainees must possess State licenses.

Moreover, he is a leader who works well with others, and he has outstanding interpersonal and communication skills. He is highly dependable and detail oriented, and he had continually demonstrated the highest level of integrity and professionalism in performing all of his duties. Notwithstanding, he is well-respected by all who have had the opportunity to work with him, and members of the Board have, accordingly, elected him Vice Chair, in this regard.

In closing, I believe that Mr. Gary Belcher has the requisite qualifications and skills to continue serving the public in an exemplary manner as a member of the Hawaii Medical Board, and I unequivocally support his candidacy with the highest possible enthusiasm.

Thank you for your time and efforts, and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,



Danny M. Takanishi, Jr., MD, FACS, FSSO

Arthur Richard Philpott
46-206 Lilipuna Road
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

April 2, 2025

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 205
Honolulu, Hawaii, 96813

Re: Nomination of Mr. Gary F. Belcher for Reappointment to the Hawaii Medical Board as a Public Member

Dear Senator Keohokalole and Committee Members:

The purpose of this letter is to recommend Mr. Gary Belcher for reappointment to the position as Public Member of the Hawaii Medical Board. Mr. Belcher has my strongest personal and professional recommendation for reappointment.

I note that I previously recommended Mr. Belcher for his initial appointment in 2021. By all accounts he has served with distinction as a Public Member and in my opinion should be reappointed. His expertise, judgment, and commitment are simply invaluable to the Hawaii Medical Board.

Until December, 2020, I was the Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel of Hawaii Residency Programs, Inc. HRP has employed and trained more than 60% of the resident trainees who have gone on to practice medicine in Hawaii. Every year, HRP sponsored more than 200 MDR or DOSR license applications/renewals before the HMB. I am therefore well acquainted with the requirements for medical licensure in Hawaii and the role of the Hawaii Medical Board in that regard.

I have known Mr. Belcher for more than 27 years. For 17 years of those years, and until his retirement in 2020 as the General and Orthopedic Surgery Residency Training Programs

Program Administrator, and Surgical Critical Care Fellowship Program Administrator, I was his senior supervisor.

Mr. Belcher's qualifications are well beyond the ordinary or expected:

Integrity: Mr. Belcher will advocate for, and do, the "right thing" without regard to personal consequences. He listens to others and considers their opinions, but ultimately he will stand firm in matters of accountability to the public as a Board Member.

Good Judgment: During the 17 years that I supervised Mr. Belcher, he was presented with numerous challenges that required him to balance the interests of the Surgery Programs, the individual residents/fellows, the academic and professional concerns, and the employer's concerns. His judgment was flawless. He never compromised, but neither did he insist on an outcome in which he was personally invested. "Do the right thing" were his watchwords.

Expertise: During his tenure as Program Administrator, Mr. Belcher was responsible for overseeing the education of more than 25 residents & fellows each year - most of whom are now practicing in Hawaii. He knew the academic requirements, the accreditation requirements, the interests of the residents, and the interests of the Programs. He was a virtual encyclopedia in that regard. He was our resident expert.

Professional Respect: I employed the Program Administrators for our 17 Resident and Fellows training programs. Most of them were with us for many years because they were prestigious positions that rarely became vacant. Mr. Belcher was the "Senior Statesman" of this elite group of professionals. When a difficult question arose for the group, or for the supervising executives, all eyes turned to Gary to ask "what do you recommend?" And the problem was rarely resolved until he responded.

Above all, Mr. Belcher is simply a gentleman who respects others, listens to others, and decides important questions based on expertise and fundamental fairness. What more could the public desire in its representative to the HMB?

Should you have any additional questions, I may be reached at this email or (808) 383-3287.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arthur Richard Philpott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Arthur" being the most prominent.

Arthur Richard Philpott

CC: Gary Belcher (via email)
Chelsea Fukunaga, Executive Officer, HMB (via email)

Mihae Yu MD FACS
Clinical Professor of Surgery
405 N Kuakini St suite 1106
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

April 3, 2025

Chair and Members of Commerce and Consumer Protection Health Committee
State Capitol
415 S Beretania St
Honolulu HI 96813

RE: Gary Belcher for Hawaii Medical Board, Public Member

Dear Committee Members:

I am honored to write a letter of support (for the second time) for Gary Belcher to serve on the Hawaii Medical Board. I am sure you have personally observed his knowledge of medical affairs and his fairness to each and every applicant. Most of all, Mr. Belcher will do his best to ensure the safety of our patients.

I have personally worked with Gary in the training of surgical residents (a 35-year relationship), and he was such a great mentor in their medical/surgical training and professional conduct.

I reiterate for you again his greatest qualities: honesty, integrity, compassion, fairness, intelligence, and in-depth knowledge of education and medical training.

I recommend Gary Belcher to the Medical Board with no reservations. We are fortunate that he is willing to serve in this capacity and contribute to ensure patient safety.

Thank you for your consideration.