



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I**  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

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**Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

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

**On the following measure:**  
**G.M. 752, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION**  
**TO THE BOARD OF SPEECH PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY,**  
**GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, OLIVIA UCHIMA,**  
**FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nadine Y. Ando, and I am the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (Department). The Department supports the appointment of Olivia Uchima, Ph.D., as a member for the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology (Board).

Ms. Uchima holds a Ph.D. in Public Health from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, a master's in communication Disorders from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a Bachelor's in Speech and Hearing Science from the University of Iowa. Her academic background equips her with both clinical and public health expertise.

She has worked at leading institutions, including The Queen's Medical Center, Kaiser Permanente, and UCLA Health, providing specialized care for patients with head

and neck cancer, neurological disorders, and swallowing difficulties. She has also performed advanced evaluations such as FEES and MBS.

Dr. Uchima's leadership roles, including her work in the Maternal and Child Health Leadership Education in the Neurodevelopmental Disabilities program and as Ethics and Licensing Chair for the Hawaii Speech, Language, and Hearing Association, demonstrates her commitment to high professional standards.

Her qualifications, including the Hawaii Speech Language Pathology License and ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence, reflect her dedication to maintaining excellence in her field.

Dr. Uchima's extensive experience and commitment to the field of speech pathology and audiology make her a highly qualified candidate for the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**GM-752**

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 9:28:17 PM

Testimony for CPN on 4/10/2025 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jihee nguyen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Olivia Uchima to be on the board of Speech Pathology and Audiology. She is an exemplary speech language pathologist and would be a great candidate to serve on the board.

**Christa Nehajenko M.S., CCC-SLP**  
Medical Speech-Language Pathologist  
christa.fleshmanslp@gmail.com

April 3, 2025

**The Honorable Members of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology**

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for the gubernatorial nomination of Olivia Uchima to the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology for a term to expire on June 30, 2029. As a colleague of Olivia, I have had the distinct pleasure of working closely with Olivia and have consistently been impressed by her professionalism, expertise, and commitment to the field of speech pathology.

Olivia brings to the table a wealth of experience, grounded in both her clinical knowledge and her dedication to the well-being of those in need of speech and hearing services. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advancing the standards of care and promoting evidence-based practices. Her work is not only recognized for its technical excellence but also for its compassionate approach to patient care, ensuring that every individual receives the highest level of service tailored to their specific needs.

In addition to her professional qualifications, Olivia exhibits remarkable leadership qualities. She has consistently taken the initiative to engage in professional development opportunities, advocate for policy changes, and mentor emerging professionals in the field. Her ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues, patients, and other healthcare providers makes her an invaluable asset to any team. I am confident that these same skills will serve her well in her role on the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology.

Olivia's appointment would bring a fresh perspective to the board, underpinned by a deep understanding of both the challenges and opportunities within the profession. Her thoughtful approach to decision-making, her capacity for critical thinking, and her commitment to upholding the integrity of the field make her an ideal candidate for this position.

I wholeheartedly support Olivia Uchima's nomination to the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology and strongly believe that she will serve with distinction and contribute meaningfully to the ongoing development and regulation of our profession.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Christa Nehajenko M.S., CCC-SLP*

*Christa Nehajenko M.S. CCC-SLP*

**GM-752**

Submitted on: 4/5/2025 3:56:40 PM

Testimony for CPN on 4/10/2025 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jill Tamashiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 5, 2025

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection,

I enthusiastically support the nomination of Dr. Olivia Uchima to the State Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology. I have known Dr. Uchima as a friend and classmate for over seven years and have great respect for her both professionally and personally. Dr. Uchima is not only skilled as a speech pathologist, but she has expressed great fulfillment in her work to help patients who undergo major surgeries restore their ability to speak and communicate. On her own time, Dr. Uchima has pursued research opportunities which addresses questions related to the work she does on a daily basis. These research endeavors focus on cancer disparities and will ultimately serve to advance knowledge in areas that are currently understudied. As a friend, Dr. Uchima has taken time to share her own academic expertise and offer help and support to me and many others despite her busy schedule. Dr. Uchima has a rare combination of intellectual ability, technical skills, and concern for others and the community. I am confident that her appointment to the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology will have significant impact on patients and families in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Jill Tamashiro, MPH



**GM-752**

Submitted on: 4/7/2025 11:04:36 AM

Testimony for CPN on 4/10/2025 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joanne Kawahigashi Oshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Olivia Uchima for the Board of Speech-Language Pathology. Dr. Uchima is no-nonsense, self-directed, and committed to the field of Speech-Pathology and the patients we serve. She has very high standards for herself and will no doubt uphold the same bar for anyone else practicing in the field.