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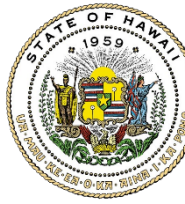
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STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

April 21, 2025

JC 31: Consideration and Confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

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

My name is Hayley Cheng, and I am the First Deputy at the Office of the Public Defender. I am writing in strong support of the judicial nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit Court.

I have known Ms. Vidinha professionally since 2007. Throughout the years, we have been opposing counsel on numerous cases. As a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and Team Captain of the Sexual Assault Division of the Honolulu Prosecutor's Office, Ms. Vidinha has been tasked with handling some of the most challenging, emotional, and adversarial cases. I have only known her to handle each case fairly, ethically, and with the utmost integrity. While zealously advocating for complainants, she has always remained professional and has been diligent about seeking justice over winning. She is deeply committed to the legal process and has earned the respect of opposing counsel for being a prosecutor we can trust. It does not surprise me to see several other written submissions from defense attorneys in support of her nomination.

District Court is truly the "People's Court." Ms. Vidinha has the demeanor, temperament, experience and knowledge to handle the high volume of cases while treating everyone that comes before her with the respect they deserve. I have no doubt she will thrive in this new role and will continue to thoughtfully and diligently serve the community. Ms. Vidinha has my strong support.

Hayley Cheng
First Deputy Public Defender

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO HO'OPI'I
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

ALII PLACE
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STEVEN S. ALM
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
LOIO HO'OPI'I



THOMAS J. BRADY
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
HOPE MUA LOIO HO'OPI'I

THE HONORABLE KARL RHOADS, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawai'i

April 23, 2025

RE: J.C. 31; JUDICIAL APPOINTEE ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA.

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee, my name is Steve Alm, and the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney stands in **strong support** of Rochelle Vidinha's appointment to the District Court and serve as a District Family Court judge.

I have known Rochelle since I was first on the bench and she did her first domestic violence misdemeanor jury trial in my courtroom. This was followed by years of her doing felony jury trials in front of me in Circuit Court. I have seen her grow over the years to become a seasoned, confident deputy prosecutor. Rochelle is head of the Sex Assault Team and, for over four years has served as the Honolulu County Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator. For the last ten years she has been the office liaison for the Special Olympics Torch Run. Rochelle has a big heart. Coming from the Waianae Coast, she knows how life can be challenging for the less fortunate. She believes in the power of the human spirit and as a former parole officer, she believes in helping people to overcome life's obstacles and get their lives back on track. She has a lot of aloha for victims and yet is fair to defendants as well.

Rochelle is bright and conscientious and believes in the criminal justice system. Rochelle is very even-tempered and will have an excellent judicial temperament. Her record shows her to have both leadership skills and a collaborate spirit.

While Rochelle becoming a judge would be a real loss to the office, she will be a great addition to the Judiciary. For the foregoing reasons, I am in **strong support** of J.C. 31. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in this matter.



T. George Paris
Managing Director

Iron Workers Stabilization Fund

LATE

April 21, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31 - Testimony in Strong Support of the Nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit

Hearing: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Ironworkers Stabilization Fund, I am writing to express our strong support for the confirmation of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the position of Judge for the District Family Court of the First Circuit, as submitted in Judiciary Communication No. 31.

The Ironworkers Stabilization Fund recognizes the importance of having qualified, fair, and dedicated individuals serving in our judiciary. Ms. Vidinha's background demonstrates a profound commitment to public service and our community. Her journey includes serving as a Parole Officer before pursuing law, followed by a distinguished career as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney since 2001, eventually rising to supervise the Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Unit. This extensive experience speaks to her capabilities and dedication.

We believe Ms. Vidinha possesses the judicial temperament, integrity, and sense of fairness essential for a judge. Her ability to make reasoned decisions while maintaining composure is crucial for the responsibilities she will undertake in the District Family Court. Her deep roots in the community and commitment to justice align with the values important to the members represented by the Ironworkers Stabilization Fund.

We are confident that Rochelle I. Vidinha will serve the people of Hawai'i with distinction and fairness. We urge the Committee to recommend her confirmation by the full Senate.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of JC31 and the nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha.

Sincerely,

T. George Paris
Managing Director



April 23, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: JC31 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Rochelle I. Vidinha, for a term to expire in 6 years.

Hearing: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 a.m.

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee on Judiciary:

Hawaii Women Lawyers (“**HWL**”) respectfully submits testimony in **support** of the nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha to **the District Court of the First Circuit** as District Court Judge for a term of 6 years.

HWL is a nonprofit organization with members including approximately 300 attorneys. HWL’s mission includes improving the status of women in the legal profession, increasing the number of women attorneys in positions of authority and responsibility, and promoting the advancement of all women.

Increasing opportunities for qualified women in the Judiciary is extremely important. As highlighted by the World Justice Project, the rule of law depends on having justice delivered by “competent, ethical, and independent representatives and neutrals who reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.” HWL believes that continuing to include qualified women in the Judiciary is vitally important and appreciates the significant strides made in the past several years to improve the diversity of our bench.

Noting that the HSBA has found Rochelle I. Vidinha to be qualified for the position of District Court Judge and for the reasons above, HWL supports the appointment of Rochelle I. Vidinha.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this nomination.

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 9:33:04 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allen Cardines, Jr.	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

RE: Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) for District Family Court Judge

Dear Chair Roads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee of Judiciary:

It is an honor to write this letter **supporting** Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) for the District Family Court Judge position.

I'm a Sr. Pastor at Nanaikapono Church in Nanakuli, a Neighborhood Security Watch Coordinator, a Commissioner on the Hawaii State Commission of Fatherhood, and a mentor/father figure. I've been pastoring for over twenty years, dealing with Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs like physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect; and household dysfunctions like domestic violence, divorce, incarceration, substance abuse, mental illness, and more.

I met Rochelle and her Sexual Assault Unit back in 2023 when we were dealing with the increase in homicides, violence, sexual exploitations, and sexual assaults. Rochell and her team provided valuable information to provide protective factors to help treat and beat ACEs and create a safer, more caring community.

Rochelle is a dedicated public servant who has worked passionately to better our community for nearly three decades. As a parole officer, Rochelle balanced her desire to help those struggling with drug addiction, anger management issues, and mental health issues with her obligation to ensure public safety. Rochelle's twenty-one-year career as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and current position as the Sexual Assault Unit supervisor and Honolulu Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator speaks volumes of her extensive trial and courtroom experience, her leadership skills, and her ability to collaborate with various agencies to positively impact our community effectively.

Rochelle reflects the unique, diverse people she will serve as District Family Court Judge. Tethered to her humble roots, Rochelle will preside with compassion and integrity, working within the confines of the law to do the right thing.

I am happy to **support** Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) in her efforts to serve the public as a State of Hawaii District Family Court Judge.

Sincerely,

Allen Cardines, Jr

April 16, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I.
VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads:

I support wholeheartedly the nomination of Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha for District Family Court Judge for the First Circuit (Oahu). I have known Rochelle for approximately 23 years, when she was a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney at the Honolulu Prosecuting Attorneys Office, and through the years, when I entered the private practice of law and the Honolulu Liquor Commission.

I am most familiar with Rochelle's work as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney when I was the Chief of the Trials Division and supervised her as a trial deputy. Rochelle was an excellent and successful trial attorney, and those skills resulted in her promotion as a Supervisor – Team Captain of the Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Unit. In addition, she is one of the most experienced trial attorneys in the Prosecutor's Office. I know a little about her life story of growing up on the Waianae Coast and being accepted and attending Kamehameha Schools. Her quest to seek higher education by attending the William S. Richardson School of Law after serving as a Parole Officer for 9 years. She then joined the Prosecutor's Office in 2001. I believe these are remarkable qualities for a judge, because it shows commitment to public service and community.

I believe that Rochelle has the judicial temperament to be an excellent judge. Rochelle has the ability to make fair decisions in respectful judgment of others. In addition, she can comport herself appropriately, without losing her composure or equilibrium even under fire. She will make an excellent judge because she is honest, trustworthy, fair, and compassionate. Her moral courage is unquestioned and her integrity is impeccable.

In addition to all that Rochelle has accomplished, she is a devoted wife and mother of 2 boys Kuponu (17) and La'akea (15). I am confident Rochelle will be an excellent jurist and make sound decisions should you confirm her as a District Family Court Judge.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment on Rochelle's nomination.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Franklin Don Pacarro, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Franklin Don Pacarro, Jr., Esq.

April 22, 2025

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: JC 31 (Nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha)

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I strongly support Rochelle Vidinha's nomination to serve as a district family court judge.

When I was first assigned to the Sexual Assault Team, I was not looking forward to the job. I had interned with the unit and had some inkling of what the cases involved. The crimes were disturbing. Prosecutions could take years. The statutes and the case law were always changing. But I accepted the post because the supervising attorney was stellar. I knew her and trusted her.

As an intern, I watched Rochelle Vidinha prosecute a continuous sexual assault case. These cases involve child molesters with recurring access to the victim. These are among the most challenging cases to try. Trials always come with surprises. This one was no different; an expert witness needed to testify earlier than expected. But Rochelle was prepared, and the new order did not rattle her at all. When the victim testified, Rochelle questioned her with patience and kindness. The little girl told a roomful of strangers about crimes no child should ever experience.

When the defendant took the stand, Rochelle did not shout or badger him. She did not need any crude inquisitorial tools. Her preparation, her attention to detail, and her confidence in the truth were all that were required. She carefully and thoroughly picked apart his story, catching details many had missed. By the time cross-examination was over, it was clear how the jury would find.

So years later, I had faith in Rochelle when I took the assignment. And that faith was rewarded. Rochelle Vidinha was an excellent Team Captain. She promptly trained me on search warrants, grand juries, and the intricacies of vertical prosecution. I saw the thorough preparation she brought to her cases. Many times, victims were initially reluctant to speak about the crimes. Rochelle would simply ask them about their lives. She cared about them as people, not simply names on a witness list or an evidence sheet.

Rochelle also treated defendants with fairness. That can be especially hard in sexual assault cases, where the crimes are completely despicable. But before becoming a prosecutor, Rochelle worked as a probation officer. She understood defendants as human beings too. Serious accusations, she stressed, deserved the highest evidentiary standards. She did not cut corners or take the easy way out. She was a minister of justice, not a demagogue or a bully.

Rochelle has exceptional knowledge of the law. But the judiciary is not simply a scholastic calling. It is a public trust. I have seen Rochelle's integrity and judgment constantly tested under extreme circumstances. Not once has she failed. Her compassion for victims, her fairness to defendants, and her fidelity to the great ideal of justice—those irreplaceable aspects of character are what recommend her to the bench. I have complete confidence in her.

Our office will lose so much when she is gone, but the benefit to the Hawai'i bench and to the whole community will be worth it.

This nomination is truly a fitting capstone to Chief Justice Recktenwald's career. I am so proud to join in support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

/s/ Daniel Hugo

April 21, 2025

LATE

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Jill Nunokawa, Community Member

Re: JC 31, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA, for a term to expire in 6 years

Hearing: Wednesday April 23, 2025, 9:15 AM, Room 225

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

My name is Jill Nunokawa and I graduated from the William S. Richardson School of Law in 1988. I have served in many capacities including President of the WSRSL Alumni Association, community activist on Title IX issues, Deputy Public Defender, various state and city positions, as well as being employed by the State of Hawai'i since 1988.

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of the confirmation of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit for a term of 6 years. Ms. Vidinha has been a career deputy prosecuting attorney dedicated to public safety, especially in areas of abuse and trauma of vulnerable people in our communities. As a former deputy public defender, I have engaged Ms. Vidinha in positive and progressive discussions about proactive, preventative and restorative justice strategies that encourage and integrate victim empowerment and rehabilitation. She has always been open to discussions that address much needed services in our diverse populations.

Moreover, within the legal practice we refer to District Court as the "People's Court" and understand this as generally the first exposure the general public has to the Judiciary. It is imperative the face, disposition, insight, understanding, judgment, and temperament reflect the concerns and resolution of the vast array of issues that come before it. Ms. Vidinha's broad background in Hawai'i combined with her legal prowess and commonsense integration affords her the unique ability to apply the law to everyday matters that effect our broad spectrum of people.

I reiterate my written testimony supporting ICA Judge Karen Nakasone, "Additionally, our generation has not witnessed or experienced the kind of dismantling of democratic principles and rule of law happening at the federal level and it is imperative our state select and confirm Judges who perform with proven integrity, transparency, diversity, equity, fairness and inclusion."

Ms. Vidinha has proven her commitment to all of these performance indicators, especially since I have engaged with Ms. Vidinha and observed her major impact to the betterment of public safety and victim advocacy for over two decades. I am confident she meets and exceeds all required criteria to be an excellent District Court Judge. She has devoted her entire professional career to public service and public safety and I wholeheartedly support her confirmation.

April 21, 2025

LATE

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31. TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: WEDNESDAY, April 23, 2025 at 9:15 a.m., Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads and other Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I highly recommend Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Rochelle Vidinha to the judiciary. Frankly, this letter is somewhat bittersweet as I do not want to lose Ms. Vidinha as my supervisor. She serves as the Team Captain of the Sexual Assault Team in my Department. Since assuming this position five years ago, Ms. Vidinha has remained very humble; she has not in any way abused her position of power. Instead, she inspires the other members of our team to do our very best.

There is a difference between a supervisor and a leader; Ms. Vidinha is definitely a leader. She leads by assigning some of the most difficult and problematic cases to herself. She leads by taking those cases to trial and addressing the concerns of victims, witnesses, defense attorneys and partner agencies, fairly and professionally. Although Ms. Vidinha has extensive experience in the courtroom, including jury trials and other proceedings, she recognizes that sometimes, the best resolution of a case is not a guilty as charged verdict, but resolving the case so that the victim does not need to testify, and the defendant can get treatment and put his life back together.

Ms. Vidinha displays the utmost professionalism towards everyone with whom she comes into contact. Because she is a sex crimes prosecutor, the adult victims or the parents/family of minor victims can sometimes be emotionally distraught and/or difficult to work with. Ms. Vidinha is extremely patient and compassionate. She is able to take an emotionally charged situation where tensions are extremely high and address what is important to all parties. She does so with compassion and grace. As supervisor of the Sexual Assault Team, she must do so not only with her own case load, but quite often, with the cases of those whom she supervises.

Ms. Vidinha would be a definite asset to the judiciary. She is recognized in the legal community as a person of integrity and trustworthiness. She takes seriously the prosecutor's duty to do justice. I would regret seeing a valued colleague leave my Department, and her departure would definitely be a great loss to our team, in particular.

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
April 21, 2025
Page 2 of 2

If you have any questions regarding the aforementioned, I can be reached at
(808) 768-6486.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thalia B.P. Murphy", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thalia B.P. Murphy

LATE

April 21, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Daisy Hartsfield

**SUBJECT: Consideration and Confirmation to the District Family Court of the First Circuit,
Judicial Appointee, ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA**

Hearing: April 23, 2025, 9:15 AM, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference, State Capitol

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT:

I am the Social Services Division Administrator with the State of Hawai`i, Department of Human Services but submit this individual testimony as a private citizen.

I have known ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA (DPA Vidinha), for almost three decades, professionally and personally, and what an honor it has been for me! Her resume speaks for itself so I am testifying about what you cannot see on paper, which is the strength of her character and the ha`aha`a she possesses.

DPA Vidinha was raised in Waianae in a close-knit family. Through the years, I've watched them support one another - through good times and not so good ones. I share this because DPA Vidinha has a strong sense of family, appreciates the hardships that families may face, and understands how the support from family is important in developing one's identity and overcoming traumatic life events.

The West side of Oahu, especially Waianae, undeservingly gets a "bad rap". DPA Vidinha has never been embarrassed about being raised in Waianae. The pride she has for the Waianae community and the resiliency she gained from breaking other people's stereotype about people from Waianae will serve her well on the bench because many of the families served are from the West side of Oahu. Her lived expertise is a strength that will help her to make better decisions for families, especially families from the West side of Oahu.

Finally, ha`aha`a – the Hawaiian word for "humility or humble". DPA Vidinha is a Native Hawaiian who is grounded, open to learning, and recognizes the value of others and the contributions they make. Living ha`aha`a involves a willingness to accept new things, acknowledge missteps, and find joy in simple things.

The person in Family Court, wearing the black robe, making decisions for families in crisis needs to know who they are, where they are from, and have ha`aha`a to serve with wisdom and aloha. DPA Vidinha has all of that and more! Family Court will be extremely fortunate to have her as a judge and I look forward to the day I can officially refer to as Judge Vidinha.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support of ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA for consideration and confirmation to the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair, Committee on Judiciary
Senate Committee on Judiciary

LATE

RE: JC 31, Testimony in Support of Nomination of
ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA (CUSUMANO)

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

I write in strong support of Rochelle's appointment to the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

Rochelle and I have been close friends for over 25 years now. We first met at ETE football practice while we were attending the William S. Richardson School of Law. We both loved football, having grown up jealously watching our older brothers play as kids. Through our conversations, we quickly discovered that we were kindred spirits; each of us valuing family and community above everything else. We both went to law school driven to make Hawai'i a safe place to raise our families. We were both eager to serve as Prosecutors upon graduation.

Rochelle served nine years before law school as a Parole Officer. It was rewarding but it was sometimes mired with frustration and disappointment. She wondered if she could do more for her community from a different point in the process. This contributed to her decision to attend law school. As a Prosecutor, she would be able to administer cases to serve the needs of the community as a whole. Rochelle understands that justice is not best served by a mere slap on the wrist or a maximum prison sentence. Justice comes in various shapes and sizes. This mindset shaped everything Rochelle did as a Prosecutor. She is consistently held in high regard as firm but fair.

After nearly 24 years of making charging decisions, working with victims, fostering relationships with community stakeholders, collaborating with law enforcement, communicating with defense counsel and being on the receiving end of whatever result was handed down, a new spark of motivation ignited. As a Judge, Rochelle would graciously accept the awesome responsibility of rendering decisions that will shape and define the lives of the litigants before her. She has the experience, devotion, and heart to issue thoughtful resolutions in all the matters that come before her.

Rochelle will be a tremendous asset to the Bench. O'ahu would be fortunate to have a smart, passionate, caring, grass roots local girl directly overseeing justice within their community. The bar would benefit from a fair-minded judge who is already accustomed to evaluating cases based purely on facts and existing law. Rochelle approaches everything she does with dedication and love. This approach is what makes her an amazing wife, mother, daughter, sister, Auntie, and friend.

Thank you for your consideration of my input on my friend Rochelle.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Michelle M.L. Puu

Michelle M.L. Puu

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 6:04:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to offer my strongest support for the nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit. Having had the privilege to work alongside Mrs. Vidinha, I am confident in her qualifications, experience, and character to serve as a judge on the bench.

Rochelle I. Vidinha is an exemplary attorney who brings extensive experience to the table, honed over years of practicing as a trial attorney. She has demonstrated a remarkable ability to handle complex legal matters with skill, precision, and a strong understanding of the law. Her extensive trial experience is an invaluable asset, and her deep knowledge of legal principles is apparent in every case she handles. Her dedication to protecting the community, particularly her advocacy for victims, sets her apart as an attorney with unparalleled commitment to justice.

Mrs. Vidinha's advocacy for victims in the community, particularly those affected by sex assault and human trafficking, speaks volumes about her character. As a zealous and compassionate advocate, she has worked tirelessly to support and empower vulnerable individuals, ensuring they receive the care, justice, and attention they deserve. Her passion for advocating for those who are often marginalized makes her an ideal candidate for the judiciary.

As a leader, Rochelle has demonstrated exceptional skills in managing her team. As the team captain of the Sex Assault and Human Trafficking Unit, she exhibited strong leadership and an unwavering commitment to justice. She has consistently shown the ability to work collaboratively, manage high-pressure situations, and lead her team to achieve favorable outcomes for victims and the community. Her leadership style is marked by humility, respect for others, and a deep commitment to ensuring that justice is delivered fairly and impartially.

What truly stands out about Mrs. Vidinha is her character. Despite her impressive professional accomplishments, she remains humble, grounded, and approachable. Her dedication to public service, her humility in leadership, and her consistent pursuit of justice make her a person of integrity and ethical standards. She possesses the qualities of a judge who will not only uphold the law but do so with empathy, fairness, and respect for all parties involved.

In conclusion, Rochelle I. Vidinha is a highly qualified and deserving candidate for the District Court of the First Circuit. Her vast legal experience, dedication to advocating for victims, strong leadership, and commitment to justice make her an ideal nominee. I wholeheartedly support her

nomination and respectfully urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to consider and confirm her to this important position.

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 8:03:15 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Shinsato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of Rochelle I. Vidinha's judicial confirmation. I have known Rochelle professionally for over 20 years and I have always respected her hard work and integrity. She has dedicated her life to public service. If given the opportunity, I believe she will preside with respect, dignity, compassion, and fairness. She embodies everything that can be expected from a member of the judiciary. I humbly submit my support for the judicial confirmation of Rochelle I. Vidinha.

April 15, 2025

Committee on Judiciary,

I highly recommend Rochelle Vidinha for Judge in the District Court of the First Circuit. I had known her since 2012 when I was a detective for the Honolulu Police Department's Sex Crimes Detail in the Criminal Investigative Division. She has always been knowledgeable, level-headed, and fair.

Rochelle is now the Team Captain for the sexual assault unit for the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, and I am now the Captain of the Violent Crimes Section of the Honolulu Police Department, Criminal Investigation Division. She has maintained her above-mentioned qualities and gained much more respect, and I know her own Deputy Prosecuting Attorneys highly respect her, too. She is the key reason why her team and HPD Sex Assault detail work well together, and she will be irreplaceable.

Thank you for considering Rochelle for a highly regarded position.

Captain Vince Legaspi
Honolulu Police Department
Criminal Investigation Division- Sex Crimes Detail
801 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
808-723-3716
vlegaspi@honolulu.gov

April 15, 2025

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF
ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

I'm proud to write this letter in support of Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha for the position of District Family Court Judge. My name is Elliot Mills, and I am the CEO of Hawaii Hospitality. I have known Rochelle for more than twenty years and can say without hesitation that with her combination of aloha and legal experience, Rochelle will be the fair and compassionate judge that our community deserves.

A local girl who grew up on the Waianae Coast, Rochelle has a true understanding of the challenges faced by the people in our community ... and the empathy which enables her to relate to, and communicate effectively with, people. Rochelle comes from a very close- knit family and was raised to treat everyone with kindness and respect. Rochelle instills these same qualities into her 2 young sons, stressing the importance of kindness and treating others as they would want to be treated.

Rochelle is a dedicated public servant who has worked passionately to better our community for more than three decades. As a parole officer, Rochelle balanced her desire to help those struggling with drug addiction, anger management issues, and mental health issues, with her obligation to ensure public safety. Rochelle's twenty-three year career as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, and current position as the Sexual Assault Unit supervisor and Honolulu Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator speaks volumes of her extensive trial and courtroom experience, her leadership skills, and her ability to effectively collaborate with various agencies to positively impact our community.

Rochelle's is a reflection of the unique, diverse people that she will serve as Circuit Court Judge. Tethered to her humble roots, Rochelle will preside with compassion and integrity, and will work within the confines of the law to do the right thing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. Mills', with a large, stylized 'E' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Elliot Mills

April 15, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair, Vice-Chair Mike Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

We, the Akim Ohana of Makakilo, are in STRONG SUPPORT of ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA for the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

As the Team Captain of the Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Unit, Rochelle has tirelessly collaborated with law enforcement, federal and state agencies, non-profit service providers, and our local communities to take a stand against trafficking in our islands. She has given all these entities a seat at the table, including survivors, to determine the best course of action for each case that arises. Rochelle operates with a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach, ensuring that the needs of victims come first. She passionately champions the cause of giving victims not just a voice but also renewed hope for a brighter future. Her relentless pursuit of justice sends a clear message: sexual assault, trafficking, and related offenses will not be tolerated, nor will they be perpetuated in our local communities.

We vividly remember attending a crucial session at our local church in Nanakuli on a Saturday. Rochelle, a proud Waianae resident, and her dedicated team enlightened us about the grim realities of child trafficking, sex trafficking, and kidnapping—issues that often remain concealed within families. Their training empowered us to recognize these crimes and understand the vital steps for reporting them. In partnership with Ho'ōla Nā Pua, an organization we wholeheartedly support, Rochelle has not only helped survivors; she has transformed them into victorious advocates for change. We confidently endorse Rochelle I. Vidinha's appointment to the District Family Court of the First Circuit because it is timely, pivotal, and imperative for building a safer future for Hawaii. We stand with her against sexual assault and human trafficking and strongly support justice for those who have suffered greatly because of these crimes.

Sincerely,

Joseph-paul K.K. Akim and Carm Celine R. Akim

Community Volunteers, Makakilo-Nanakuli

April 15, 2025

RE: JC 31 — Testimony in Support of the Nomination of Rochelle ‘Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano)
Hearing Date: April 23, 2025, at 9:15 a.m. — Conference Room 225

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

It is an honor to write this letter in support of Rochelle ‘Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) for the position of District Family Court Judge. Having had the privilege of working alongside Rochelle in the fight against human trafficking, I have witnessed firsthand her unwavering commitment to justice, her ability to bring people together, and her deep respect for those she serves —both within and outside the legal system.

While serving as the Statewide Human Trafficking Abatement Coordinator with the State of Hawai‘i Department of the Attorney General, I met Rochelle through her role as the Honolulu County Human Trafficking Task Force (HCHTTF) Coordinator. Together, we collaborated on a human trafficking awareness training for financial institutions. From the outset, Rochelle approached this work with intentionality, consistently aiming for meaningful, high-quality outreach. What truly set her apart was her ability to handle difficult conversations with grace and focus. Rather than reacting defensively to critiques about the challenges in trafficking prosecutions, she embraced the opportunity to educate. Rochelle fostered understanding by clarifying the complexities of the issue without undermining the integrity of the system.

Despite the immense responsibility of leading the Sex Assault Team, Rochelle devoted time to HCHTTF initiatives without compensation. Her dedication was both selfless and inspiring. When I learned of an opening for a Research and Data Analyst position within the Task Force, I eagerly joined her team, confident that her leadership would be nothing short of transformative.

Rochelle’s commitment to justice extends far beyond the courtroom. As HCHTTF Coordinator, she led not just by coordinating from behind a desk, but by actively engaging with the community. Whether presenting to residents in Wai‘anae, attending town hall meetings, participating in panels, or supporting local events, Rochelle was always there—no matter how busy her schedule—putting her time and energy into direct outreach. She was never one to ask "why"; she simply showed up, ready to make a difference. Her dedication to outreach reflects a level of service that goes above and beyond her official duties.

Through her leadership, Rochelle has fostered collaboration where others saw division, uniting law enforcement, service providers, and survivors. Her years as a prosecutor are invaluable, yet it is her willingness to learn and evolve with the needs of trafficking victims that sets her apart. She understands that their long-term recovery is paramount, and with genuine compassion, she consistently prioritizes connecting them to the resources they need for stability and long-term recovery.

Rochelle's balance of legal expertise and empathy makes her uniquely suited for the bench. She seeks not only accountability but also dignity for all involved, especially survivors. Her ability to listen, adapt, and approach each case with an open mind is exactly what is needed in a judge.

Rochelle's leadership has transformed the work she does into a true public service. I wholeheartedly support her appointment and have full confidence that she will serve the people of Hawai'i with the same professionalism, compassion, and commitment she has demonstrated throughout her career.

Sincerely,

Lindsey K. Amina



William A. Harrison
william@harrisonlawcenter.com
www.harrisonlawcenter.com
Tel: (808)523-7041

American Savings Bank Tower
1001 Bishop Street, Suite 2828
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813
Fax: (808)538-7579

April 15, 2025

Via: Web: www.capitol.hawaii.gov/submittestimony.aspx

SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Chair: Sen. Karl Rhoads

Vice Chair: Sen. Mike Gabbard

DATE: Monday, April 23, 2025

TIME: 9:15 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Hearing for Consideration and Confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

Dear Honorable Senators: Karl Rhoads, Mike Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

I am writing to you on behalf of Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha, Esq., who has been nominated by Chief Justice Mark E. Recktenwald to fill a judicial vacancy in the District Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai'i.

For the last 44 years, I have practiced law with a focus on criminal defense. I have known Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha, Esq., since approximately 2003, shortly after she began her career as a Deputy Prosecutor. I was genuinely pleased to learn of her appointment to the District Court judgeship, as I believe she would serve with distinction and make an outstanding judge.

Over the years, I have worked with Rochelle on numerous cases, including jury trials. Through these professional interactions, I have gained a clear sense of how she would approach her responsibilities on the bench. Rochelle is exceptionally intelligent, possesses unwavering integrity, and approaches her work with thoughtfulness and respect. She is not swayed by personal biases and is always open to hearing differing viewpoints. I have never seen her act in anger or speak in a condescending manner.

Rochelle also brings a unique and valuable perspective to the judiciary. Her academic background in psychology and sociology, coupled with her experience working with Hawai'i's parole system, will undoubtedly enrich her understanding and approach to sentencing and rehabilitation.

Beyond her legal work, Rochelle is deeply civic-minded. She has long been active in her community, volunteering with Special Olympics, serving as a coach, referee, and den mother, and earning recognition as a Hall of Fame Inductee for my alma mater WSRSL's iconic "Ete Bowl."

Having served as a member of the Judicial Selection Commission, I always refer to Rule 11 of the Commission's Rules, which outlines the essential qualities for judicial candidates: integrity, moral courage, legal ability, experience, intelligence, compassion, fairness, diligence, decisiveness, and judicial temperament. Rochelle exemplifies each of these qualities.

Above all, the most critical attribute I seek in a judicial candidate is a demonstrated commitment to ensuring that every individual who appears in court is treated with fairness and respect. I have no doubt that Rochelle will uphold this fundamental principle.

In short, I wholeheartedly and without reservation recommend Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha for confirmation as a District Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Sen. Karl Rhoades
Sen. Mike Gabbard
April 15, 2025
3 | Page

Please feel free to contact me should you require any additional information or further elaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William A. Harrison". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "William" being more prominent and the last name "Harrison" following in a similar style.

William A. Harrison

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 8:54:12 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

April 21, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

Aloha Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair,

May this letter be received in support of Rochelle ‘Iwalani Vidinha for the position of District Court of the First Circuit Judge. My name is Tammy Bitanga and I am currently in the roll of Ho’ola Na Pua’s Director of Community Engagement at Pearl Haven, Specialized Residential Treatment Facility, and Advocate for Survivors of Human Trafficking. Being a CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children) Survivor myself has given me a unique opportunity to work closely with Rochelle since she became the Honolulu County Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator and am confident that Rochelle will be the fair and compassionate judge.

As the Task Force Coordinator, Rochelle worked in close collaboration with state and federal law enforcement, other state entities including Child and Welfare Services, Juvenile Probation, and Girls Court, and government and non-profit service providers, to battle trafficking in our community. Rochelle has brought the survivor voices to the table which is very important to assist in the serving of this population. We are now able to develop excellent relationships with the various stakeholders and has engaged in community outreach events to inform and educate our community about human trafficking.

Rochelle is an excellent communicator who has made herself available to task force members as we work together to develop victim-centered policies and protocols. Being raised in Hawai‘i she understands the challenges faced by the people in our community and has dedicated the nearly 30 years as a public servant helping children and vulnerable adults.

As a parole officer, Rochelle balanced her desire to help those struggling with drug addiction, anger management issues, and mental health issues, with her obligation to ensure public safety. Rochelle's twenty-one year career as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, and current position as the Sexual Assault Unit supervisor and Honolulu Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator speaks volumes of her extensive trial and courtroom experience, her leadership skills, and her ability to effectively collaborate with various agencies to positively impact our community.

Please feel free to reach out to me should you have any concerns,

cel: 808.221.0015 email: tammybitanga@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Tammy Bitanga

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 7:10:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia J Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: APRIL 23, 2025, 9:15 AM, Conference Room 225

Aloha Senator Rhoads,

It is with great honor and a privilege to provide this letter in support of Rochelle ‘Iwalani Vidinha (Cusamano) for the position of District Family Court Judge. My name is Malia J. Smith. I was a professor and former Assistant Dean at Hawai‘i Pacific University and am currently the owner of MKM Properties, Sustainable Ideation, LLC, which manages a 20-acre regenerative food farm, Ai Love Nalo Restaurant and ‘Ai Love Health, LLC, which offers health and nutrition classes and meal plans for Native Hawaiians who are struggling with obesity, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. I have known Rochelle for more than 42 years, and I can say without hesitation that her strong character and values, fortitude, and professional experience are the kūkulu (foundation) that will make her a pono, fair, and compassionate judge that our community needs and deserves.

I met Rochelle during our 7th-grade year at Kamehameha Schools. We both hail from the west side of O‘ahu, with me from Nānākuli and Rochelle from Wai‘anae. Growing up, we saw firsthand the numerous challenges faced by our community, such as drug addiction, child abuse, domestic violence, crime, and homelessness. On many occasions, I recall our conversations about these types of issues, and Rochelle always said, “Sometimes good people do bad things.” And she consistently reminded me that although it is necessary to hold people accountable for their actions, it is equally important that we fulfill our kuleana by listening, having compassion, and helping when at all possible. Therefore, it was no surprise when she decided to become a public servant and engage the judicial system.

Rochelle has dedicated her entire life serving our community. First, as a parole officer, she worked tirelessly for almost 9 years to help guide those who struggled with drug addiction,

mental health, and anger management challenges while balancing her compassion for her clients with ensuring the safety of our community. Then, for the past twenty-one years, Rochelle has worked passionately as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and is now the Sexual Assault Unit supervisor and Honolulu Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator, which clearly exemplifies her excellent leadership and communication skills, extensive trial and courtroom experience, and her capacity to work effectively with affiliated agencies. She has been so effective in her role and is highly respected by her colleagues insomuch that she recently received the distinguished 2024 Outstanding Woman Lawyer Award by the Hawai‘i Women Lawyers organization.

Her lifetime experience working on both sides of the aisle, first as a parole officer helping parolees effectively transition back into society to a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney who holds people accountable for their actions, she intimately understands what it takes to be fair, honorable, and lawful. Reflecting on our past conversations, Rochelle has always stayed true to her convictions. Throughout her career and lifetime, she has fortified her prescient sentiment of “sometimes good people do bad things” by listening, having compassion, and helping when possible while fulfilling her kuleana to protect and honor all people.

Through her humble beginnings, education, and professional experience, she undoubtedly will preside with strength, intelligence, empathy, and probity bound by the marks of the law. Thus, with confidence and certitude it is truly an honor to provide this testimony in support of Rochelle’s nomination for District Family Court Judge.

If you have any questions or want to discuss Rochelle’s qualifications further, please contact me at 808-721-2174 or 808-799-9727.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,

Malia J. Smith, EdD

Owner/CEO

Sustainable Ideation, LLC

‘Ai Love Health, LLC

MKM Properties

April 17, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, APRIL 23, 2025, 9:15 am, Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads,

It is an honor and privilege that I write this letter in support of Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) for the position of District Family Court Judge. As her younger sister, I have had the unique privilege of watching her positively impact the lives of others with her intelligence, compassion, and innate people skills.

Rochelle is proud of her humble upbringing along the beautiful Waianae coast. We were raised in an intact middle-class home by two hard working and loving parents. Our parents modeled and instilled in us the values of hard work, family first, and respect. We had nightly family dinners and experienced love and support from our parents (who by the way, just recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary). The safety and security we were blessed with was often a stark contrast to the social and economic problems that afflicted many in our community: drug addiction, broken families, poverty, domestic violence, and criminal activity, to name a few.

It wasn't uncommon to hear our neighbor's cry for help as her drug addicted boyfriend beat her or for Rochelle to comfort a friend whose childhood was torn apart by witnessing her mother being abused by her alcoholic father. Sadly, we often had a front row seat to the social challenges that significantly impacted families in our neighborhood and broader community. Although these were harsh realities to witness, they have helped to shape Rochelle into the woman and professional that she is today. Throughout her 33 years of public service, she earned the respect of those that she supervised as a Parole Officer, as well as the many individuals and agencies she's partnered with as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney. Rochelle holds everyone accountable for their actions and strives for justice; however, she also understands the importance of helping broken people become whole again, not only for the sake of that individual, but also for the greater good of the community and Hawai'i.

Throughout her life, it's been awe-inspiring to witness Rochelle's intelligence beautifully dance with her uncanny ability to connect with people. I am confident that her life's journey has prepared her with all of the personal attributes and legal expertise necessary to make her an excellent, fair, and just District Family Court Judge.

Sincerely,
Elise L. Rego

April 16, 2025

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

RE: JC 31, Testimony In Support of Nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha
HEARING: April 23, 2025, Wednesday, 9:15 am, Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads:

It is an honor to write this letter in support of Rochelle I. Vidinha for the position of District Family Court Judge. She has been a public servant since 1989 starting her career working as a parole officer with the State of Hawaii, Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA) under the Department of Public Safety and up through the ranks at City & County of Honolulu, Prosecutors Office as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney.

I know Rochelle very well, having worked together at HPA for almost nine (9) years. Her humble beginnings as a parole officer gave her a unique opportunity to apply her communication skills working directly with adult male/female parolees at the back end of the Criminal Justice System. She prepared release plans that best served the parolee, community, and victims; referred parolees to community services that specifically targeted their individual needs; and effectively communicated her intentions by listening with empathy, setting a focused agenda, evoking a response, and getting the parolee to commit to the plan. When those practices failed, she would then assess the risk to public safety or to the parolee themselves by issuing a warrant of arrest to reincarcerate; participated in the probable cause hearings process; and testified in front of the full parole board, parolee, witnesses, and their defense attorney for parole revocation hearings.

Rochelle has since developed a great deal of trial experience, trial strategy, and legal analysis during her twenty-three (23) year tenure as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and has gained expertise in negotiating appropriate case settlements as an alternative to trial. With her knowledge of the law, Rochelle has been assigned to serve as Team Captain in the Sexual Assault Unit where she specializes in the prosecution of Adult and Child Sex Crimes. She previously prosecuted general felonies ranging from theft to murder.

Rochelle has always displayed a passion for justice and is relentless in her efforts to ensure it prevails. She exhibits a high degree of energy toward her work, compassion for the victims, and an unimpeachable ethical standard that will serve her well as a District Family Court Judge.

I am very pleased to support Rochelle Vidinha in her efforts to serve the public as a State of Hawaii District Family Court Judge.

Sincerely,

Kevin Rego

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025
Time: 9:15 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol
From: Anne E. Perreira-Eustaquio

Re: J. C. 31; Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the
Frist Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Rochelle I. Vidinha

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

I am honored to submit this testimony in strong support of J. C. 31, nominating Rochelle Vidinha for District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

While I have not had the opportunity to work with Rochelle directly in a professional setting, I have followed her impressive legal career with pride and admiration. As her cousin, I have always known Rochelle to be a woman of integrity, intelligence, and unwavering dedication to her community. Her professional accomplishments reflect her strong work ethic, sound judgment, and commitment to justice—qualities that are vital for anyone serving on the bench.

Rochelle has always exemplified compassion, fairness, and humility in both her personal and professional life. She is deeply rooted in her family and community, and she approaches every situation with empathy and a genuine desire to help others. These qualities, combined with her extensive experience and understanding of family law, make her exceptionally well-suited for the Family Court.

Chief Justice Recktenwald's nomination of Rochelle is a testament to the high regard in which she is held by the legal community. I have no doubt that she will bring the same level of professionalism, fairness, and care to the bench that she has demonstrated throughout her career.

I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Rochelle Vidinha as a District Family Court Judge. Mahalo for the opportunity to offer my heartfelt support for this outstanding nominee.

SING & ENRIGHT, LLP

A LAW CORPORATION
707 RICHARDS STREET
PENTHOUSE 1
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

CHRISTIAN ENRIGHT
christian@enrightlawhawaii.com

TEL: (808) 302-8085
FAX: (808) 523-9137

April 17, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chairperson
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 Beretania Street, Conference Room 016
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE VIDINHA
HEARING: APRIL 23, 2025, 9:15 am, Conference Room 225

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express my strong support regarding the appointment of Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Rochelle Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit. I have known DPA Vidinha for nearly two decades both during my 16-year tenure as a Deputy Public Defender and now as a private practitioner. She did not ask me to submit this letter. When I heard that she was a candidate for this position, I asked her if I could write on her behalf.

Rochelle is tasked with the prosecution of the most emotionally, heartbreaking and mentally taxing class of offenses that are litigated in the criminal justice system. I have represented several defendants whom she prosecuted and my comments are based on my personal experiences with her in this professional capacity. Rochelle consistently conducts herself in a fair, honest and respectful manner. She is a zealous and diligent advocate for every one of her complainants.

Over the years, I have gained tremendous respect for her as I've come to know her not just as a prosecutor but also as an individual. I consider her to be a friend despite our adversarial roles in the courtroom. Rochelle is a rare type of person – tough and formidable yet humble and compassionate. If given the opportunity, Rochelle will be an excellent judge and our community will continue to benefit from her service.

Respectfully,

/s/ Christian Enright
CHRISTIAN ENRIGHT

April 18, 2025

The Honorable Karl Rhoads
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: JC 31 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the
District Family Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee,
ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA, for a term to expire in 6 years

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, April 23, 2025
TIME: 9:15 AM
PLACE: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I highly recommend Rochelle I. Vidinha, for District Family Court of the First Circuit.

I have known Rochelle for many years, she is very well-liked and well respected. I find her to be of the highest ethical and moral character. Rochelle is very hardworking and very dedicated in everything she does.

Rochelle would make an excellent District Family Court Judge. Rochelle's honesty, integrity, intelligence, demeanor, and strength in character would be a great asset to the Court. The Court needs someone like Rochelle who understands and cares. Rochelle will be able to make the hard and right decisions.

I give Rochelle my highest recommendation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jo Carreiro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "C".

Jo Carreiro

Date: April 19, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: JC31, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit,
Judicial Nominee, Rochelle I. Vidinha

Hearing: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225
415 South Beretania Street

It is my honor to write this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Judicial Nominee, Rochelle I. Vidinha as judge for the District Court of the First Circuit. I have known Ms. Vidinha since 2005, when I served as a law clerk at the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

Ms. Vidinha possesses the characteristics and skills necessary to be an excellent judge. She is intelligent and has a strong knowledge of criminal law. Ms. Vidinha is professional with everyone she encounters whether she is speaking to a judge or speaking to a member of the community. She treats everyone with dignity and respect regardless of status. I have never witnessed Ms. Vidinha behave or speak in an inappropriate manner.

Over the years, as a Deputy Public Defender for the State Office of the Public Defender, I have represented defendants in numerous felony cases in which she has been the assigned Deputy Prosecuting Attorney. What I appreciate about Ms. Vidinha is though she is a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, she sees the humanity in defendants. She is tough, but reasonable.

Ms. Vidinha is a fighter for the complaining witnesses in her cases, yet she is willing to work towards resolving cases in a way that is fair for all involved. She is collaborative when necessary and steadfast when needed. She has a great disposition and temperament. My dealings with her have always been pleasant.

Even though we are in an adversarial system, Ms. Vidinha understands the meaning of the word justice. She understands that justice balances the interests of the complaining witness with the rights of the accused. This is why I believe she will make an exceptional judge. In her legal practice, Ms. Vidinha consistently demonstrates she has the characteristics and skills necessary to be an effective judge.

Again, I strongly support the confirmation of Judicial Nominee, Rochelle I. Vidinha as judge for the District Court of the First Circuit. If selected, Ms. Vidinha will be a positive reflection of the Hawaii State Judiciary.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony in support of Judicial Nominee Rochelle I. Vidinha.

Respectfully,

/S/OKECHUKWU AMADI

Okechukwu “Okie” Amadi
Deputy Public Defender
State of Hawaii

April 20, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF ROCHELLE VIDINHA
TO SERVE ON THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT**

Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I write to express my **strong support of Rochelle Vidinha** to be confirmed to serve on the District Court of the First Circuit.

I first met Ms. Vidinha seven years ago when I began working at the Honolulu Department of the Prosecuting Attorney. As a new prosecutor, I admired her for handling sexual assault cases, among the most professionally and personally challenging cases a prosecutor can have.

After a time, my office was moved near Ms. Vidinha's. Being just down the hall, I heard how thoughtfully she counselled victims and how carefully she considered issues of particular cases. I saw first-hand the time and effort that she put into preparation, preparation that became obvious whenever I saw her in the courtroom. I recall always being impressed with her calm, competent, and able handling of whatever matter she appeared for.

Ms. Vidinha would bring a thoughtfulness and deliberation to the bench that would benefit everyone who came to her courtroom and our whole community.

I fully support Rochelle Vidinha to serve on the District Court of the First Circuit. I ask the Committee to send her nomination to the full Senate for speedy confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Thomas J. Michener, Esq.

April 20, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

It is an honor to provide this testimony in strong support of Rochelle Vidinha for the position of District Family Court Judge. Her deep connection to the community, remarkable ability to engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and unwavering compassion and empathy make her an ideal candidate. These qualities will undoubtedly allow her to serve as a fair and effective judge, positively impacting lives while protecting those who are most vulnerable.

I have had the privilege of knowing Rochelle for nearly 50 years, having grown up alongside her and her family in Waianae. Throughout her life, she has exemplified respect, thoughtfulness, and grace. Rochelle distinguished herself among her peers, demonstrating leadership through her intelligence, warm demeanor, integrity, and honorable character. Having grown up in a community affected by poverty, drug addiction, and domestic violence, she developed a profound understanding of hardship. This experience has shaped her unique perspective that enables her to advocate for victims while also providing a catalyst for meaningful change in the lives of others.

Rochelle's commitment to public service is evident in her distinguished career. From her early years as a parole officer to her tenure as a deputy prosecuting attorney, she has established herself as a principled yet compassionate professional. While she firmly upholds accountability, she also recognizes that consequences can foster transformation and growth. Her upbringing has shaped her perspective—while adversity is inevitable, perseverance and dedication pave the way for success. Rochelle has already made invaluable contributions to the Hawai'i judicial system, and in this role, she will have an even greater impact on the lives of those she serves. Without a doubt, she is the ideal candidate for this position, and she will continue to serve the people of Hawai'i with compassion and integrity.

Sincerely,
Tanya Enrico

In Support of Rochelle I. Vidinha
Judicial Nominee
District Court of the First Circuit

This is in support of the appointment of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the State of Hawaii.

I have known Ms. Vidinha since she was a student in one of my classes at the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawaii. She was an outstanding student in many ways. Not only was she an active participant and strong student, she was always prepared and enthusiastic about the class and learning everything she could.

She remained that way as she entered law practice and has committed to public service for the last 30 plus years as a lawyer. She has consistently chosen public service as she progressed in law.

I have encouraged her to apply for a judgeship because I believe she has the intelligence, integrity, dedication and strength to contribute highly to the Judiciary and ask you to give her your full consideration.

Thank you.

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 12:33:35 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Takata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I enthusiastically and without reservation support the nomination of Rochelle Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit. I became acquainted with Ms. Vidinha at the Honolulu Prosecutor's Office where I supervised her in the Felony Trials Division. She proved herself to be a knowledgeable and formidable deputy prosecutor who passionately protected victims of sexual assault, which are very difficult cases, and later combatted human trafficking. Her legal knowledge, courtroom experience and dedication to protecting the most vulnerable in society make her an ideal candidate for the bench where she will be an asset to the judiciary and community.



April 21, 2025

LATE

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Aloha Senator Rhoads,

My name is Cindy Ujimori and I am writing to submit public comment in support of Rochelle Vidinha Cusumano's nomination for the position of District Family Court Judge.

Over the past nine years, I have had the pleasure of working with Rochelle in her role as Liaison for the Honolulu Prosecutor's Office. She has consistently been one of our strongest supporters of Special Olympics Hawaii and, without a doubt, is the most organized, efficient, and successful partner I have worked with. Together, we have collaborated to raise awareness and resources for the 3,400 children and adults with intellectual disabilities who participate in our programs. We are truly grateful for her dedication and support of our Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Hawaii.

Although my interactions with Rochelle are not within the legal or judicial arenas, I can personally attest to her deep compassion, her unwavering commitment to community service, and her willingness to go above and beyond to help others. While education and legal experience are important qualifications for a District Family Court Judge, I believe that compassion and empathy are equally vital, especially when dealing with Hawaii's children.

I have no doubt that she will uphold the law, hold individuals accountable, and help make our community a safer place. There may be many qualified candidates for this role, but Rochelle's proven dedication to our community, along with her fairness, professionalism, and integrity, will serve the Court, and the people of Hawaii, with distinction.

As a local girl, born and raised in Hawaii, Rochelle brings with her not only a strong legal foundation but also a generous heart and a deep understanding of the unique needs of our island community. I am confident she will serve the Judiciary with honor, compassion, and excellence. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony in strong support of Rochelle Vidinha Cusumano.

Mahalo nui loa,

Cindy Ujimori
Vice President of Community Outreach

April 21, 2025

LATE

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary

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

I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support** of the consideration and confirmation of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit for a term of 6 years.

Rochelle is an incredible lawyer, upstanding individual, and dear friend. She has a proven and qualified record in her role as Team Captain of the Sexual Assault and Sex Trafficking Unit at the Prosecutor's Office (a role she has held since May of 2019), and she is recognized as being fair and even handed by her colleagues. Rochelle also brings a depth of lived experience in the pursuit of justice having served as a parole officer from 1989-1990 prior to attending the William S. Richardson School of Law and then as a prosecutor for the entirety of her career.

The judicial bench should be adequately balanced and reflect the composition of Hawaii's citizens. Significant strides have been made in the past several years to improve the diversity of our bench, both gender-wise and ethnically, but I believe that more can and should be done to appoint qualified women of color to fill judicial vacancies to bring balance to the bench and Rochelle is an excellent candidate.

Rochelle is extremely qualified and has an excellent reputation in the legal community. She would be an ideal person to fill the position previously held by Judge Brian Costa. Please vote to confirm her today.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of her confirmation.

Very truly yours,



Kimi M. Ide-Foster, Esq.

April 21, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary



Re: JC 31, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA, for a term to expire in 6 years

Hearing: Wednesday April 23, 2025, 9:15 AM, Room 225 & Via Videoconference

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

I am writing in **strong support** of Rochelle I. Vidinha's confirmation to serve as a District Court Judge for the First Circuit.

Ms. Vidinha has dedicated her legal career to public service and brings with her a breadth of experience that will serve the judiciary well. Since 2019, she has led the Sexual Assault and Sex Trafficking Unit at the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, where she is known not only for her leadership and work ethic, but also for her fairness and professionalism. Her earlier work as a parole officer and her decades of experience as a career prosecutor give her a unique perspective on both sides of the justice system and a deep understanding of the community she serves.

Rochelle is widely respected in the legal field, and her nomination represents both professional excellence and the kind of diversity that strengthens public trust in our courts. The judiciary should reflect the rich cultural and demographic fabric of Hawai'i, and Rochelle's confirmation would be a meaningful step toward ensuring greater representation of women of color on the bench.

I am confident that Ms. Vidinha will serve with integrity, thoughtfulness, and a steadfast commitment to justice. I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm her appointment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support.

Very truly yours,

Christilei Hessler, Esq.

JAMES T. LEAVITT, JR.
JOHN D. YAMANE
WOODRUFF K. SOLDNER
MICHAEL R. CRUISE

LEAVITT, YAMANE & SOLDNER

ATTORNEYS AT LAW
A LAW CORPORATION

NICOLE KALAKAU
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737 BISHOP STREET, SUITE 1740
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

TELEPHONE: (808) 521-7474
FACSIMILE: (808) 521-7749

April 21, 2025

LATE

Nicole Kalakau, Esq.
737 Bishop Street, Suite 1740
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Letter in Support of Rochelle Cusamano for Judicial Appointment

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

I am writing in strong support of Rochelle Cusamano's nomination to serve as a District Family Court judge in the First Circuit.

I had the privilege of working alongside Rochelle during our time as prosecutors, and I can speak firsthand to her exceptional qualifications, her steady leadership, and most importantly, her unwavering commitment to fairness and justice. Even when advocating on behalf of the State of Hawaii and victims, Rochelle never lost sight of what was most important, doing the right thing. She prioritized integrity over convenience and fairness over winning—qualities that are essential for a judge entrusted with upholding the law in our community.

Rochelle is a natural leader. Whether guiding younger attorneys through complex cases or taking initiative on policy and trial strategy, she leads with clarity, empathy, and strength. She is someone who not only earns respect but inspires it. Throughout our work together, I found myself turning to Rochelle for guidance, both professionally and personally. She has been, and continues to be, a role model for me in how to practice law with honor, discipline, and heart.

Her deep understanding of the legal system, her lived experience in our local community, and her thoughtful, grounded presence make her uniquely suited to serve on the bench. She embodies the values of our judiciary and the spirit of our communities.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully urge you to confirm Rochelle Cusamano's appointment. Hawai'i deserves judges of her caliber—fair, principled, and deeply committed to justice.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Kalakau', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nicole Kalakau, Esq.

April 21, 2025

LATE

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

JC 31 TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

Hearing: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 9:15 in Room 225

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing this in strong support of Rochelle I. Vidinha for the District Court of the First Circuit of Hawaii.

I have known Rochelle Vidinha for fifteen years, first when I was a law clerk for the Honorable Dexter D. Del Rosario and later I was fortunate enough to work with her at the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney.

As a law clerk, Rochelle Vidinha always treated me with respect and kindness. I observed that same attitude reflected in the way that she treated opposing counsel, court staff and judges. No matter how aggravating opposing counsel behaved, Rochelle maintained a respectful, patient and fair-minded approach. Her calm and measured demeanor is particularly well suited for the District court's high-volume.

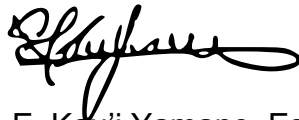
Later, when I became a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Rochelle Vidinha was a helpful mentor to myself and countless others that sought out advice. Rochelle generously took the time to answer my questions and provide guidance. Taking time out of her busy trial schedule to listen to the details of my case and even staying late to provide her recommendation on challenging cases. Her ability to actively listen to problems and provide creative solutions with respect and compassion would make her a great addition to Hawaii bench.

Rochelle Vidinha has committed herself to maintaining the highest level of representation for the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney. She takes on challenging cases and finds a way to successfully present her case within the bounds of the law. She demonstrates a deep understanding of the law and a keen appreciation of the magnitude of the decisions left to the court's discretion. She demands the highest level of competence, professionalism and justice for herself and the prosecutors that are fortunate enough to be on her team.

Rochelle Vidinha is a dedicated family woman with a strong sense of community. Her caring attitude and wealth of knowledge will continue to serve her well and bring a unique judicial temperament to the Hawaii bench. Rochelle Vidinha is a skilled trial lawyer and great mentor to many people. Her experience in criminal law, combined with

her compassion as a litigator and active member of the Hawaii community, position her well for service as a District Judge with the District Court of the First Circuit of Hawaii. I strongly support Rochelle Vidinha's application without reservation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Yamane", with a stylized, flowing script.

E. Kau'i Yamane, Esq.

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 4:00:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacquelyn Esser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **strongly support** the nomination of Rochelle Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit.

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 4:55:10 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lea Hong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of JC 31 - submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA, for a term to expire in 6 years; Hearing: Wednesday April 23, 2025, 9:15 AM, Room 225 & Via Videoconference

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

In my individual capacity, I am submitting testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit for a term of 6 years.

I have known Rochelle for over 20 years -- she is an incredible lawyer, upstanding individual, and dear friend. She served as Team Captain of the Sexual Assault and Sex Trafficking Unit at the Prosecutor's Office (a role she has held since May of 2019), and is widely recognized as being fair and even handed by her colleagues. Rochelle has past on the ground experience as a parole officer from 1989-1990 prior to attending the William S. Richardson School of Law and then as a prosecutor for the entirety of her career.

Rochelle is an excellent candidate and is extremely qualified and has an excellent reputation in the legal community. She has my strongest and unreserved support and I urge you to confirm her appointment.

Mahalo -

Lea Hong

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 5:06:45 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Carreiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Senator Karl Rhoades, Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, Testimony in Support of the Nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha

HEARING: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15am, Room 225

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

It is my honor to submit written testimony in favor of and in support for Rochelle I. Vidinha for a seat on the Bench of the District Court of the First Circuit's -Family Court.

i have known Rochelle I. Vidinha for the past two decades or longer. I have worked with her on countless occasions while she held the position as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for the Honolulu Office. She is what is known as a "Career Prosecutor" which in yester-year was a legendary position to attain. Held in high esteem by colleagues and those in the law enforcement realm - the Career Prosecutor is a rarity in the twenty first century.

What you are gaining by appointing Rochelle I. Vidinha to the Family Court as a Judge is immeasurable if you have reviewed her background. Lengthy stints as a criminal trial attorney, Coordinator and Team Leader for the Human Trafficking Task Force, Supervisor for the Sex Assault Unit within the Honolulu Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, which in turn has led to collaborations with Federal Law Enforcement, City and State Law Enforcement entities, Child and Welfare Services, Juvenile Probations, Women's Court, and Ho'ola Na Pua. All of which can be brought to bear when adjudicating the most complex of Family Court resolutions.

Her fairness, compassion, respect, and humility will certainly have a positive outcome during the performance of her duties. Being a devoted public servant who has worked with extreme dedication, Rochelle I Vidinha will no doubt be an excellent contributor to a path of achieving impartiality, objectivity, and equity that the position of Family Court Judge requires.

This choice will pay dividends far down the road and it will become clear that Rochelle I. Vidinha was the right person for a necessary job. A necessary job that holds enormous impacts for our community's future well-being.

Very truly yours,

Thomas Carreiro

Senior Vice President of Corporate Security

American Savings Bank

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 7:09:34 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David C Scheidt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

David Scheidt
WP&H,LLC dba Cal-Med Hawaii
3049 Ualena St #101
Honolulu, HI 96819
Dcscheidt@wphllc.us
714-476-2743
4/19/2025

Aloha Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

My name is David Scheidt and for the past 25 years my family and I are national providers of medical supplies and equipment in support of our military's active duty and their dependents supporting the Tricare program.

It is with great pride and absolute confidence that I write this letter of recommendation for Rochelle Vidinha-Cusumano, who is seeking to serve as a district family court judge here in the State of Hawaii.

I have had the privilege of knowing Rochelle for the majority of my life. Both of us were raised in the tight-knit community of Waianae, and our shared roots have given me a deep understanding of her character, integrity, and lifelong commitment to fairness. Our educational paths continued together at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, where I witnessed firsthand Rochelle's sharp intellect, unwavering work ethic, and genuine compassion for education and fellow students and alumni.

Throughout the years, Rochelle has served as a deputy prosecuting attorney with the city and county of Honolulu. She has consistently demonstrated the qualities essential to judicial service: integrity, impartiality, and a profound respect for the law and the people it serves. She possesses a rare balance of empathy and resolve, coupled with a deep understanding of the unique social and cultural complexities that shape our local communities.

Rochelle is someone who does not take responsibility lightly. Whether facing personal challenges or professional demands, she has always approached every situation with thoughtful consideration, sound judgment, and fairness — qualities I believe will make her an outstanding judge.

I fully support and recommend Rochelle Vidinha-Cusumano for this important role, and I am

confident that she will serve with distinction and honor.
Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact me.

Mahalo

April 21, 2025

LATE

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Conference Room 225
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

Please find this letter in strong support of Rochelle Vidinha's nomination as a Family Court judge for the First Circuit. Over twenty years ago, we were sworn in together as we both started clerkships with the Honolulu Prosecutor's Office. I witnessed her work ethic, growth, and resiliency firsthand for many years.

What is most impressive is her ability to balance her career with her family life. We both struggled to juggle parenthood while balancing a large caseload of serious offenses that require long hours. Seeking justice for victims of sexual assault and trafficking can take a heavy toll on you and it is easy to bring the stress of that home with you. But Rochelle has been able to safely navigate that workspace while juggling care for both her parents and her two boys.

The ability to manage that will suit her well in Family Court. She has seen the effects of sexual violence as it can tear a family apart. There were many cases where relatives were pitted against each other, not knowing who to believe. Whether it was her Waianae upbringing or her days as a parole officer, Rochelle knows how to stay composed under fire. She will be a fine addition to the Judiciary. Please confirm her nomination.

Sincerely,

/s/ Adrian Dhakhwa

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 9:08:45 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Germaine Meyers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Rhoades, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Honorable Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I'm in **STRONG SUPPORT** of JC31 to confirm the appointment of Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) to the District Court of the First Circuit.

My name is Germaine Meyers. I'm a Nanakuli Hawaiian Homestead Lessee and a member of Nanaikapono Protestant Church (NPC).

Ms. Vindinha is an accomplished and hard-working member of the Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Unit in the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney. She and her team have been a blessing to our NPC Neighborhood Security Watch team and community by preventing, deterring, and reducing sexual assaults and human trafficking within our West Oahu community, as well as all of Honolulu.

Please confirm JC31.

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 9:51:50 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elyse Oyama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA CUSUMANO, for a term to expire in 6 years.

Hearing: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 a.m.

I am writing in strong support of Rochelle I. Vidinha Cusumano for the District Court of the First Circuit. I have had the privilege of knowing Ms. Vidinha Cusumano for over seven years and worked with her during my time as a fellow prosecutor. Since May 2019, she has served as the team captain of the Sexual Assault and Sex Trafficking Unit, a role that reflects both her legal skill and her commitment to justice.

Ms. Vidinha Cusumano is a dedicated and hardworking public servant. She leads by example, demonstrating integrity, fairness, and a deep understanding of the law. She was always willing to listen, offer guidance, and support my growth as a young prosecutor. Her ability to mentor while managing complex and sensitive cases is a testament to her exceptional character.

She also possesses a judicial temperament that would serve the bench well. She is not only professional and composed, but also unafraid to provide honest feedback in a constructive manner. I believe she will bring these qualities to the District Court with honor and diligence.

I wholeheartedly support her nomination and believe she would be an outstanding addition to the Judiciary.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Elyse Oyama

LATE

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC31, TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I.
VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 A.M.; Conference Room 225

I am writing this letter on behalf of Rochelle I. Vidinha Cusumano who is a District Court of the First Circuit Judicial Nominee. I am currently a deputy corporation counsel for the Department of the Corporation Counsel, but previously worked as a Honolulu deputy prosecuting attorney for almost eight (8) years.

It was at the Prosecutor's Office that I first met Rochelle. At the time, she had already been working there for a number of years. Once I was elevated to prosecuting felony cases, I was fortunate enough to work with Rochelle. On a number of occasions, I sought her guidance on legal and strategic issues. She was always willing to listen, assist, and share her experiences with me. I valued and trusted her knowledge of the law, judgment, and ethics, and still do.

Rochelle was one of the most accomplished deputies at the Prosecutor's Office. This was evident from the heavy duties and responsibilities entrusted to her in various supervisory positions and her handling of some of the most serious and high publicity criminal cases. She sought justice, not necessarily convictions, but always vigorously advocated on behalf of victims, and worked tirelessly to keep our community safe.

Above all, she was poised and respectful not only to judges, but also to other attorneys, court staff, witnesses, victims, police officers, and our fellow co-workers. The qualities that made Rochelle such an effective and respected prosecutor would also make her an excellent District Court Judge.

Sincerely,
Kurt Nakamatsu

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 10:40:54 PM
Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naomi Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 21, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

It is an honor and a privilege to write this letter in support of the confirmation of Rochelle I. Vidinha (Cusumano) for a position as a District Family Court Judge.

I know the committee has read all about Rochelle’s lengthy professional career as a Parole Officer and Deputy Prosecutor. I'd like to share a little bit about Rochelle’s personal life and a snippet of my professional exchanges.

I've known Rochelle since we were in the third grade and in Blue Birds together. We've been inseparable since. Even in elementary school, Rochelle was admired by all. She was in the gifted and talented program, was very athletic (ran like the wind) and she was shy.

Rochelle was blessed with a family that was intact, loving and supportive and was raised in the Waianae coast. She has always been proud of her Waianae roots. Unfortunately she witnessed many of the negative behaviors and outcomes from violence, abuse, and drug use, etc. in Waianae. Likely what prompted her call to public service.

One would never know Rochelle was shy if you ever observed her in court. Rochelle easily mastered communication skills and the legal vernacular. She is even tempered, speaks eloquently with mindfulness and purpose. Rochelle embodies all the characteristics worthy of a Judge. She is honest, empathetic, committed to upholding the law and works toward the best possible outcomes for all stakeholders. I experienced this first hand as the Manager of Social Services for a health-care organization from 2001-2016 where we occasionally worked on community reintegration with patients who were both legally encumbered and severely and profoundly mentally ill.

Rochelle exemplifies good character. She is thoughtful and kind even when stern.

Thank you for taking the time to review my letter in support of Rochelle's confirmation.

Best regards,

Naomi Morgan

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/22/2025 12:57:46 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tenari Maafala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads; Vice Chair Gabbard; and Esteemed Members of The Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Tenari Ma'afala, I am a retired Honolulu Police Officer with 29 years of service, and, former President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers (SHOPO) of 20 years consecutively.

I am writing in Strong Support on behalf of District Court of The First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA (CUSUMANO). I have known ROCHELLE both Professionally and Personally for approximately thirty (30) years.

As a former Police Officer I have witnessed first hand ROCHELLE'S Professionalism and Excellence that were reflected in her Passion, Preparation, Presentation, and Articulation of her facts and findings with her cases. Personally, ROCHELLE'S Husband Mike Cusumano and I began our careers together as Police Officers on May 18, 1989 with the HPD 104th Recruit Class. Our families do attend various functions together throughout the year(s).

I am humbly asking for your favorable consideration and confirmation for ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA (CUSUMANO) as Judge with the District Court of The First Circuit.

Much Aloha, Mahalo, And GOD Bless You All,

Tenari Ma'afala

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/22/2025 8:23:07 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorida O'Neill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads,

It is my pleasure and honor to strongly recommend Rochelle Vidinha for the positions of District Court Judge and District Family Court Judge.

My name is Dorida O'Neill, Felony Unit Supervisor with Victim/Witness Kokua services at the Prosecuting Attorney's Office in Honolulu. I have over 15 years of experience working in the criminal justice arena and while I have worked with many people over the course of my career, Rochelle is one individual who uniquely stands out.

During our time together, Rochelle has consistently demonstrated exceptional skills, strong work ethic, and a remarkable commitment to achieving justice for victims of crime. I have had the privilege of observing Rochelle bring comfort to the hurting hearts of parents of victims of sexual abuse. I have seen her be understanding and compassionate when speaking with sexual abuse/human trafficking victims as she guides them through the process and supporting their wishes, even if it meant that a case didn't move forward.

In addition to serving for 23 years as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, she had the opportunity to serve as a parole officer for 9 years. While helping parolees transition back into our community, she was reminded that good people sometimes make bad decisions, but they do not need to be defined by those decisions. She learned that treating people with respect and compassion while holding them accountable for their actions, is the key to igniting positive and meaningful change.

It's not just Rochelle's technical skills that impress me and everyone that comes in contact with her, however, Rochelle is a joy to work with because of her amazingly positive attitude and her ability to work collaboratively with federal, state, and county law enforcement agencies as well as governmental and non-governmental service providers that specifically focus on combatting human trafficking and sexual abuse.

Equipped with extensive legal experience and a strong commitment to community service, Rochelle's experience, both inside and outside of the courtroom, will enable her to be a compassionate and fair judge. I am confident that Rochelle would be a great fit for the Judiciary ohana. Not only will she bring the kind of skills and experience you are looking for in an applicant, but she will also quickly become a valuable asset and help the Judiciary to administer justice in an impartial, efficient and accessible manner in accordance with the law.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 808-265-4348.

Sincerely,

Dorida O'Neill

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/22/2025 8:23:20 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Please confirm the appointment of Rochelle I. Vidinha (Cusumano) for the position of the District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Rochelle absolutely possesses all the qualities of a remarkable judge: The judge who will uphold the law, and will do so with empathy, compassion, fairness, and respect for all parties involved.

It is undisputed that Rochelle is an experienced trial litigator who is fearless in court. Her legal knowledge and skills will translate well on the bench. She will absolutely make fair rulings based on the law of this state.

Also evident is her passion and love for this state, and the people in it. Rochelle will ensure that every decision she makes in her court room will benefit this beautiful community.

She also truly embodies an ideal judicial temperament: reasonable, fair, humble, hard-working, open minded, courteous but also firm, positive, compassionate, and kind.

Rochelle truly meant to be a judge of this State she loves so much.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my strong support.

Michelle "Mishelle" Kim

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/22/2025 8:27:55 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Stacey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I write, in my personal capacity, in strong support for Rochelle Vidinha for a position in the District Court of the First Circuit. I worked with Rochelle for nearly ten years while we were both Deputy Prosecuting Attorneys for the Honolulu prosecutor's office. She had a strong reputation for being tough, smart and capable. More recently, from a completely different viewpoint, I encountered her when she was the lead prosecutor for a high profile sex assault case that involved a victim who lived in a building where my wife worked. Prior to trial, Rochelle communicated well with my wife, who had little previous exposure to the court system. My wife and I were present with the elderly victim in the Circuit Court. Despite the high stress that comes with trial, Rochelle was cool and calm under pressure, and communicated appropriately with the victim and my wife about the case, which resolved in the middle of a jury trial. Both my wife and I were very happy with Rochelle's competence and strength, and also her empathy and communication skills. Having been a prosecutor for many years, I am very familiar with what makes a good judge. Rochelle is a perfect example of that person. I strongly support her nomination and urge you to confirm her for this position.

Mahalo, Rich Stacey



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LATE

April 22, 2025

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: **JC31, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the District Court of the
First Circuit, Judicial Appointee *ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA***

Hearing: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at 9:15 a.m.
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conf. Rm. 225
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, Senator Chang, Senator San Buenaventura and Senator Awa,

I strongly support the appointment of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the position of District Judge of the First Circuit. Ms. Vidinha is a dedicated public servant who is strongly committed to our community and its people. She has talent, experience and pragmatism that will serve her well on the District Court bench.

I first met Ms. Vidinha in law school 25 years ago. She was ambitious and hardworking then, and when I next saw her years later in her position as a Deputy Prosecutor, she brought the same energy to her role. We practiced against each other for many years, and she was always fair and practical in her approach to her cases. She is a prosecutor who understands that her job is the pursuit of justice for our community. Sometimes that means to be zealous in her advocacy for a victim; sometimes that means to be compassionate towards a defendant. I have always appreciated her ability to analyze a case through the lens of the pursuit of justice and, no matter what, do her job fairly and competently.

I have no doubt that she will bring this ability to analyze the cases before her and apply the law in a fair and impartial way to her new role as a jurist. She has incredible experience as a trial deputy for 24 years to draw on. She also has strong community ties to her hometown of Wai'anāe, being born and raised there and graduating from the Kamehameha Schools. I believe this connection to her community is what grounds her and will shape her decisions as a judge. The

District and Family Courts have a high level of interaction with litigants, both represented and pro se. I am confident that Ms. Vidinha possesses the many skills needed to interact with community members of all backgrounds while making fair decisions and managing a diverse caseload.

I look forward to Ms. Vidinha joining the District Court bench, whether it be at the District Court or Family Court. I have no doubt that she will be strong contributor to either bench and that she will serve our community well as a jurist. I urge you to confirm her.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal K. Glendon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Crystal K. Glendon

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/22/2025 8:38:47 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Leonard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 22, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Distinguished Senators,

Please accept this letter of enthusiastic support for the judicial appointment of Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha for District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit. I have known Ms. Vidinha professionally for approximately 6 years in my position as Statewide Coordinator of the Missing Child Center Hawai'i (MCCH) in the Department of the Attorney General. I have served as a child protection professional in Hawai'i for over 20 years, including 13 years as a licensed attorney, and practiced Family Law for 6 years.

Ms. Vidinha is a highly respected, award-winning prosecutor who has devoted her life's work to public service in Hawai'i. In her long and impressive career at Honolulu Prosecutor's Office, she serves the people of O'ahu with tremendous honor, leadership and humility. She has earned herself an outstanding reputation for being a strong and effective advocate for victims of crime, including children who were reported missing, physically and sexually abused, and exploited or trafficked by offenders on O'ahu. Because I am responsible for coordinating law enforcement efforts to recover missing, endangered and exploited children across all four counties, I am well aware of Ms. Vidinha's impressive work and collaboration with the Honolulu Police Department, FBI Honolulu, Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Attorney's Office, State Attorney General's Office, First Circuit Family/District/Circuit Courts, O'ahu Children's Justice Center, victim service providers and other community stakeholders. Her leadership continues to strengthen the community and law enforcement as a whole and ensure justice and healing for so many deserving victims.

MCCH is a member of the Honolulu County Human Trafficking Task Force and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Multi-Disciplinary Team, which are currently led by Ms. Vidinha in her demanding role as lead prosecutor and Team Captain of the Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Unit at the Honolulu Prosecutor's Office. In addition, Ms. Vidinha actively participates in the multi-agency CSEC Steering Committee, which is co-chaired by the Judiciary (First Circuit Family Court) and the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. It is through my experiences working and collaborating closely with Ms. Vidinha on these various committees and task forces that I learned of her strong and unrelenting commitment to social justice, the public interest and service to legally, socially and economically disadvantaged communities across Hawai'i.

Not only does Ms. Vidinha possess a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the court systems and processes but, as a hardworking mother herself, she can relate to and connect with people on a practical and human level. She has the right balance of objectivity and sincere compassion. She has the appropriate judicial temperament to administer the law. She would make decisions that are just and fair. She is unbiased and impartial. She is an excellent and effective communicator and uniter. She is a leader, mentor and role model who would undoubtedly make a lasting positive impact on court-involved individuals, families and children.

Ms. Vidinha has all of the credentials, experience, knowledge, work ethic and passion to be an exemplary judge and would be a huge asset to the District Family Court and the State of Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments.

Respectfully yours,

Amanda Leonard

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/22/2025 10:25:38 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Landon M.M. Murata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, members of the committee,

It is my pleasure to submit this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit. I have known Ms. Vidinha both professionally and personally for over 20 years. We worked together at the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney for a number of years and been friends ever since. I am very familiar with her work ethic, job performance, and her overall character. As a career prosecutor she has the integrity, strength of character, and innate sense of justice and fairness that is essential to the job. As a person, she is compassionate and empathetic; a wonderful wife and mother of two; and a good friend. She is a person who truly cares about our community and the important role judges play in our system of government. I can say with supreme confidence that she has exactly the qualities and characteristics that we, as a community, should be looking for in members of our judiciary.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

April 22, 2025

Judiciary Committee, Hawai'i State Senate
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE

**Re: April 23, 2025, Testimony in Strong Support of Rochelle I. Vidinha
Cusumano's Nomination to the District Court of the First Circuit**

Aloha Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of JC31, the nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha Cusumano (Nominee Cusumano) to the District Court of the First Circuit.

I first had the pleasure of meeting Nominee Cusumano twelve years ago when I began working at the Honolulu Department of the Prosecuting Attorney. As a new prosecutor, I observed, from afar, her handling of a multitude of sexual assault cases. Eventually, I had the pleasure of working alongside her in the Sexual Assault Unit where she was my immediate supervisor. I have personally seen her balance family life with the demands of being the Sexual Assault Unit supervisor while simultaneously handling her own demanding case load. Supervising and mentoring were only some of her responsibilities, others being the Honolulu Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator and spearheading and engaging in numerous community outreach events that helped survivors of sexual abuse.

Chief Justice Recktenwald's trust and nomination of Nominee Cusumano is a testament to her temperament and demeanor which embodies the qualities that all should strive for on the bench. Nominee Cusumano's commitment to well-reasoned analysis would support fair outcomes, and her kindness and empathy would diffuse much of the tension that can appear in any courtroom setting. I have no doubt that she will bring the same level of commitment, professionalism and fairness to the bench just as she has demonstrated throughout her distinguished career.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Loren E. Haugen

April 22, 2025

LATE

To: Senate Chair Karl Rhoads and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Governor of the State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i State Capitol

Submitted via website

RE: SUPPORT FOR CONFIRMATION OF ROCHELLE VIDINHA, FOR JUDGE,
DISTRICT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

I write in support of candidate Rochelle Vidinha. Ms. Vidinha is extremely qualified and is well-respected in the legal community.

I personally know Ms. Vidinha through previously working with her at the Honolulu Prosecutors Office, as a member of the Hawai'i Sexual Assault Response and Training (HSART) team as well as through our membership with the Bruisers Football Team.

Ms. Vidinha has extensive litigation and trial experience, she possesses the ability and work ethic to handle large case dockets and has the character and ability to lead. In all my years of working with her I also know she is able to remain fair and impartial at all times. She also has the ability to quickly analyze complex legal issues, to think on her feet and to push the boundaries in areas of the law that have no prior precedent as can be seen in the multiple cases she has tried in her career.

Litigating sexual violence crimes including sex trafficking is NOT easy. In fact, they are the hardest crimes to prosecute in this State. Despite that, Ms. Vidinha has committed her career as a prosecutor to litigating sexual assault and sex trafficking crimes. Not only does she litigate these cases, but she also leads an entire team of prosecutors in the hardest cases in our state.

Her work does not stop at litigation, she also works with various agencies across the State to improve system responses. In working with her as a member of the HSART Team I can also attest to her work and collaboration on this committee that has led to the improvement of the way the State tests and processes sexual assault kits and has also advanced the overall coordination of multi-disciplinary teams on each island.

She has the upmost admiration and respect of the numerous agencies she works with. I strongly and without hesitation recommend confirming Ms. Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit. Her appointment will ensure and uphold fairness and efficiency in our judicial system and the betterment of the community at large.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit support.

Mahalo,
Ha'aheo M. Kaho'ohalahala, Esq.

LATE

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/23/2025 7:19:46 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa De Mello	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dear Honorable Senators: Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing in strong support of Rochelle I. Vidinha for the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

I have known Rochelle for approximately 18 years as a colleague and then as my supervisor of the Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking team at the Honolulu Prosecutor's Office. She is knowledgeable, highly respected and has proven herself to be a passionate and fierce protector of justice. She was my mentor and support that kept me functioning with a high case load, busy trial schedule and under the most stressful circumstances. Even though she was the "boss" with many hats, she never hesitated to jump in and help anyone in need. Her dedication to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community and her legal ability will make her a valuable asset on the bench.

I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm her appointment and let her get to work.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit my testimony in support.

Testimony of the
HAWAII STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
relating to the nomination of

Rochelle I. Vidinha
District Court Judge of the First Circuit (JC31)

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Mark M. Murakami
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 a.m.
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference
State Capitol

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) Board of Directors' comments on JC 31, Nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha for the District Court of the First Circuit.

After a rigorous process, described below, the HSBA Board of Directors concluded that Ms. Vidinha is **QUALIFIED**. Ms. Vidinha has considerable experience in the public sector as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and Supervising Prosecuting Attorney. She has demonstrated her commitment to public service, her community, and to survivors of violence, abuse, and neglect for much of her professional life. She has considerable jury trial experience and experience with settling contentious litigation.

The HSBA Board of Directors followed its multi-step process to arrive at its conclusion, which included:

- The nominee was notified of the HSBA appointment review process, which includes a questionnaire requesting educational credentials, legal and other professional work experiences, and personal references; a resume; a copy of the Judicial Selection Commission (JSC) application; a form authorizing disclosure from the Office of Disciplinary Counsel of any disciplinary action; and an interview with the HSBA Board of Directors.
- The HSBA membership received an electronic notification of the appointment and a request for comments on the nominee.
- A neutral fact-finding body comprised of three HSBA Board members was called upon to review documentation submitted by the nominee, contact references submitted by the nominee review comments received from the HSBA membership, conduct follow-up for clarification, if necessary, and prepare a report for the HSBA Board.
- Ms. Vidinha submitted documentation, which was reviewed, and the references listed were contacted for their personal opinions and observations. The comments and letters received from HSBA members reflected an affirmation of Ms. Vidinha in all categories of the

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HSBA criteria, which include Integrity, Diligence, Legal knowledge and ability, Professional experience, Temperament, Financial responsibility, Public service, and Ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position.

- The Executive Director and I met with Ms. Vidinha on April 17, 2025, to discuss the subcommittee's findings.
- On April 21, 2025, the HSBA Board of Directors interviewed Ms. Vidinha in executive session.
- The HSBA Board deliberated and voted that Ms. Vidinha was qualified.

Thank you for your time and allowing the HSBA to share our process and determination of qualification.