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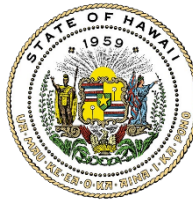
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STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

March 29, 2026

**JC 25: CONFIRMATION OF ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY TO THE
DISTRICT COURT OF THE THIRD CIRCUIT**

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

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) strongly supports the confirmation of Judicial Nominee Andrew M. Kennedy to the District Court of the Third Circuit.

Ms. Durante served as a deputy public defender in the Kona Branch. During his tenure as deputy public defender, Mr. Kennedy served as an important resource for the Kona Branch in both trial and appellate matters. Mr. Kennedy quickly gained a reputation as fair and measured in his dealings with the court and opposing counsel but also as a skilled and zealous advocate for his clients.

After leaving the OPD, Mr. Kennedy went on to private practice and expanded his legal knowledge and experience to civil matters as well. He has served the West Hawai'i legal community as a West Hawai'i Bar Association president, served on the Hawai'i Jury Instructions Committee, Criminal Justice Act Hawai'i District and volunteered for bar and legal related activities. As further proof of his dedication to the community, Mr. Kennedy has taken court-appointed cases, including those with serious charges, to continue his service to indigent criminal defendants.

Mr. Kennedy possesses the temperament, academic and professional background, legal knowledge and experience and respect of the legal community which is necessary to serve as a member of the Judiciary. Mr. Kennedy has proven to be an ethical, diligent, thoughtful and insightful practitioner and he will undoubtedly carry those qualities on to his service on the bench.

The OPD strongly supports the confirmation of Judicial Nominee Andrew M. Kennedy to the District Court of the Third Circuit.



West Hawai'i Bar Association

P.O. Box 351 • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i • 96745

westhawaiiibar@gmail.com

TESTIMONY

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

Hearing: March 31, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.

RE: **JC 25 - confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit,
Island of Hawai'i, Judicial Nominee, ANDREW MICHAEL
KENNEDY**

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

The Executive Board of the West Hawai'i Bar Association (WHBA) enthusiastically supports the nomination of Andrew Michael Kennedy as District Court Judge of the Third Circuit Court. The WHBA represents approximately 115 attorneys serving the West side of the Island of Hawai'i.

Last year, the Legislature approved funding for a second District Court Judge for the Kona Division. Kona District Court has carried an unmanageable number of cases for many years, causing significant delays in the resolution of cases.

Mr. Kennedy brings with him a wealth of knowledge having practiced extensively in both State and Federal Court here in Hawai'i and beyond. Mr. Kennedy currently serves as the West Hawai'i liaison to the HSBA and is a past president of the WHBA. We believe that Mr. Kennedy possesses integrity, diligence, legal knowledge and ability, professional experience, judicial temperament, public service, and the ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position. We look forward to having Mr. Kennedy continue to serve our community with respect and dedication from the bench.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on the nomination of Mr. Kennedy.

Very Truly Yours,

Rachel L. Thompson, Esq.
President, West Hawai'i Bar Association

Testimony to the Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026 Regular Session

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 31, 2026 at 9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

By

Robert D.S. Kim

JC 25, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit, Island of Hawai`i, Judicial Nominee ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY, for a term to expire in 6 years.

As a retired circuit court judge and Chief Judge, I respectfully present testimony in strong support of the Judicial Nominee ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY for the District Court of the Third Circuit, located in Kailua-Kona, Hawai`i, for a term to expire in 6 years. I am appearing before you as a private citizen, having taken a vacation day from work.

I have known Mr. Kennedy for many years in a professional capacity, as a private practice litigator. Mr. Kennedy had appeared in my court numerous times in his capacity as a court appointed counsel for indigent defendants.

Throughout those years, he was always prepared and assisted the court by handling court appointed cases when requested to do so. In each instance he acted professionally and diligently on behalf of his clients. Mr. Kennedy is widely respected by the judges and the Kona Bar. Mr. Kennedy is a man of integrity and calm temperament.

I support Mr. Kennedy's nomination without reservation. I can answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you for the opportunity to support this important nomination.

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 7:31:22 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Ibarra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair,

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair,

Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Ronald Ibarra

SUBJECT: JC25 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit, Island of Hawai'i, Judicial Nominee, ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY, for a term to expire in 6 years.

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

I strongly support the confirmation of the appointment of Andrew Michael Kennedy to the judicial position in the District Court of the Third Circuit. I served 28 years as a Circuit Court Judge in the Third Circuit. As the Chief Judge/Administrative Judge for over 20 years, I have worked with numerous attorneys who became judges. I also had administrative authority over the judges in the Third Circuit. I have known Mr. Kennedy for more than 10 years. He has litigated cases before me. He has the personal and professional traits to become an excellent judge. He is diligent, hardworking, respectful, open minded, fair, and decisive. He would be able to move the District Court calendar yet giving everyone an opportunity to be heard. He is well respected within the legal community as well as the community at large.

It is without hesitation that I strongly support his confirmation. Should you have any questions, please contact me at jri6501@yahoo.com. Thank you for allowing me to testify.



LATE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

CHAMBERS OF
LESLIE E. KOBAYASHI
SR. UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

DISTRICT OF HAWAII
300 ALA MOANA BLVD., RM C-423
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96850-0338

TELEPHONE
(808) 541-1331
FACSIMILE
(808) 541-1386

March 30, 2026

The Honorable Karl Rhoads
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
P.O. Box 37443
Honolulu, Hawaii 96837

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members,

I write in support of Andrew M. Kennedy, Esq.'s appointment as state district judge for the Third Circuit of the State of Hawai'i. I urge your confirmation of Mr. Kennedy. He has served on the District of Hawai'i's Criminal Justice Act ("CJA") panel of attorneys for several years and has defended indigent individuals who cannot be represented by the Federal Defender's Office here in Federal Court. I have presided over jury trials, sentencing hearings and other court matters where Mr. Kennedy was the defense attorney. He has represented many clients who were faced with serious federal criminal charges. He is always smart, professional, respectful of the court, opposing counsel, his client and the jury, and dedicated in every matter that he has appeared in court before me.

Mr. Kennedy has the qualities to be an excellent judge, not just a good one. His temperament is outstanding - I have seen him work with extremely difficult clients in such a respectful and calm manner. I regret that his appointment will deprive the District of Hawai'i of his work as CJA counsel but have every confidence that our loss will result in great benefit to the interest of justice and the Third Circuit Court for the State of Hawai'i.

March 30, 2026

Page 2

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or desire further information.

Very truly yours,


Leslie E. Kobayashi
Senior U.S. District Judge

LEK:sq

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 9:39:46 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick Manansala Macapinlac	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

29 March 2026

To: Senate Committee on the Judiciary

My name is Frederick Manansala Macapinlac. I have been a licensed attorney for the State of Hawai‘i since 2014 and have been practicing in Kona since my admission, the first three and a half years of my time practicing was as a Deputy Public Defender covering the Kona District Court.

I have had the opportunity to know Mr. Kennedy as a co-worker, a fellow member of the criminal defense bar, and as an opposing counsel. With those three different perspectives in mind, I can whole heartedly say that I support confirming Andrew Michael Kennedy as District Court Judge for the Third Circuit for the Kona District.

Mr. Kennedy has a deep commitment to the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Hawai‘i and is both knowledgeable and passionate about the law. He has a reputation in the Kona community as a well researched attorney and frequently contacts practioners in other judicial circuits and around the nation to find emerging legal issues. He is also known to help others in brainstorming and researching legal issues. In my time working with him, it was not uncommon for him to send me text messages either in the early morning or extremely late at night about case law. This enthusiasm always came back to a fundamental desire to ensure his clients were afforded zealous advocacy and due process under the law.

This commitment to the law is also apparent in his diligence. Mr. Kennedy is thorough when it comes to investigations, motions practice, trial preparation, as well as post conviction litigation. He has appeared before the Hawai‘i State Supreme Court numerous times. These were not accidents, they were the result of identifying potential legal issues through investigation, properly preserving the objections at the trial level through motions and trial preparation, and drafting briefs that present fundamental issues of law that need to be resolved by the Intermediate Court of Appeals and the Hawai‘i State Supreme court as part of post-conviction work.

From my experience watching Mr. Kennedy in the courtroom, he will have great judicial temperament. He is known for being light-hearted off the record and respectful to the court,

opposing counsels, and clients. I have no doubt that he will treat the counsels and parties who appear before him with the same respect and light-heartedness he already displays.

The most important factor is Mr. Kennedy's ties to the local community. He is not moving from another island, he has lived and practiced in Kona for well over a decade. In serving the local community, he is aware of the struggles of living on the Big Island such as lack of adequate public transportation, having to go to another island for medical treatment, the lack of a power grid and running water in some West Hawai'i communities, the increasing cost of rent and housing in West Hawai'i and he will be responsive to litigants facing these issues.

I believe Mr. Kennedy is immensely qualified to be the District Court Judge for Kona and support his confirmation.

Sincerely,
Frederick M. Macapinlac, Bar No. 10113

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/26/2026 7:17:36 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezra Witsman	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

My name is Ezra Witsman and I am submitting testimony in support of Andrew Michael Kennedy.

Before my retirement, I was a high school social studies teacher for more than twenty-one years. Prior to teaching, I practiced law for approximately 15 years. I have also been a business person.

For more than 20 years, my students participated in the We the People Competition. This national competition is a mock congressional hearing. Students write essays on various constitutional issues. After reading the selected essay, students are asked questions about various constitutional issues.

To help students prepare for the competition, there is a mentor assigned for each unit. The mentors are local attorneys or judges. They help the students research and write their essays. Also, they help students read their essays and answer questions.

Andrew was one of the attorneys who volunteered to be a mentor. He always worked well with the students to prepare them for the competition. The students expressed to me that they enjoyed working with Andrew. As part of the students' preparation, the mentors attended several Saturday practices.

Due to my work history, I am in a unique position to evaluate Andrew's aptitude to become a judge. It is my opinion that Andrew has the characteristics to become an excellent judge.

With full confidence, I give Andrew my highest recommendation.

Jessie Gamez
March 30, 2026
Re: Submission of Testimony for JC25

To the Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jessie Gamez and I am a law student at the Alexander J. Blewitt III School of Law, where I will receive my J.D. this May. I offer this testimony in strong support of the judicial nomination of Andrew Kennedy to the Third Circuit, Island of Hawai'i.

I first met Mr. Kennedy as an aspiring law student with more ambition than experience. From the beginning, he treated me not as an outsider to the legal profession, but as someone fully capable of belonging in it. His mentorship was, and continues to be, transformative for me—professionally, intellectually, and personally. His guidance has shaped my trajectory in the law. He is someone who opened doors I did not know existed, and who guided me through them with patience, generosity, and unwavering belief in my potential.

One of the most meaningful experiences of my early career was accompanying him to Oahu for my first federal trial. It was the kind of opportunity that young lawyers dream of but rarely receive. Throughout that trip, he modeled what it means to be both an exceptional advocate and an exceptional human being. He took the time to explain strategy, to answer every question—no matter how basic—and to ensure that I understood not just what we were doing, but why it mattered. Watching him in the courtroom was a masterclass in preparation, clarity, and respect for the rule of law. Outside the courtroom, he showed the same respect and kindness to everyone we encountered, from court staff to opposing counsel. He is the type of advocate that I aspire to be.

What has always stood out to me is his integrity. Mr. Kennedy is principled without being rigid, confident without being self-important, and brilliant without ever making others feel small. He has a rare ability to elevate the people around him, and I am one of many young lawyers whose careers have been shaped by his mentorship.

I believe deeply that Mr. Kennedy will bring to the Third Circuit the same qualities he has brought to every aspect of his professional life: intellectual rigor, fairness, humility, and a profound respect for the law and the people it serves. His judgment is steady, his temperament is exemplary, and his commitment to justice is sincere.

For these reasons, and with immense gratitude for the role he has played in my own development as a lawyer, I offer my full support for his confirmation. I firmly believe that our legal system will be better for it.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective.

/s:/ Jessie Gamez

Law Office of Georgette A. Yaindl, LLC
Georgette Anne Yaindl 8940
P.O. Box 307
Kailua-Kona Hawai'i 96745-0307
(808) 224-0219 v/txt (877) 300-8869 fax
gyaindl@gyattorney.com

March 30, 2026

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary
The Senate
33rd Legislature, State of Hawai'i

via: <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>

Dear Committee leadership and members,

Re: **SUPPORT FOR JC25 JUDICIAL NOMINEE ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY**

DATE: Tuesday, March 31, 2026
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 016 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

I write in strong support for the confirmation to the Third Circuit District court nominee Andrew Michael Kennedy. Not often does a candidate present for the district court with such a perfect complement of experience and insight that the district court uniquely demands. I have known Andrew for a decade and observed him in the Kona courtroom, in oral argument before the state Supreme Court, chairing our local bar association, and contributing to the improvement of our profession as a presenter at conventions on the law. Also, I personally have been extremely fortunate and grateful to have Andrew to go to when seeking reliable consult or intel on legal strategy and argument.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

/s/ Georgette A. Yaindl
GEORGETTE ANNE YAINDL

Laird Law LLC
Post Office Box 1685
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96745
808-756-1996
dawn@laird.law

Hon. Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Hon. Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Hon. Members of the Committee on Judiciary

Dear Madams and Sirs:

As a solo practitioner in Kona, Hawai'i, and a member of the Hawai'i State Bar for thirty years, I am writing in support of Acting Chief Justice Sabrina McKenna's judicial appointment of Andrew Michael Kennedy to the District Court of the Third Circuit.

Mr. Kennedy is highly qualified for this position, having practiced in both criminal and civil law for years, both on the State and federal levels.

Mr. Kennedy will be an excellent fit for the Judiciary, given the breadth of his knowledge of the law, his collegial temperament, and his ability to lead and mentor other attorneys and non-attorneys.

In the years that we have both practiced law in the Third Circuit, I have witnessed Mr. Kennedy consistently appear as a zealous advocate for his clients, and with a personal integrity and unflappable style that has served to build relationships with other attorneys, judges, judicial and governmental staff, and his clients.

Mr. Kennedy is a student of the law – he is always learning, always seeking the law's true intent, always examining the law to best serve his clients. He does not shy away from challenging issues or cases, but rather is eager to use the law to help members of our community and to help develop the rule of law in our state.

Mr. Kennedy's leadership skills are proven by his multiple terms as president of the West Hawaii Bar Association. Mr. Kennedy also devotes substantial time to committee and pro bono work.

Mr. Kennedy is fully capable of excelling in this appointment, and of being a leader and team player within the Judiciary. His appointment will benefit our local community through his service and acumen.

I wholeheartedly support his nomination.

Sincerely,

/s / Dawn H. Laird

Dawn H. Laird
Attorney at Law
Laird Law LLC

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 9:01:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Benjamin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I write in strong support of the judicial nomination of Andrew Kennedy to the District Court of the Third Circuit. In addition to Andrew's strong character and legal skills, I'd like to highlight three reasons for my support.

First, I believe the perspective of a defense attorney, especially one with public defense experience, is an important attribute for effective service on the bench. Andrew will bring valuable experience and insights as a judge resulting from his many years of defense work.

Second, Andrew cares about his community. His long-time residency on Hawai'i Island gives him valuable perspective on the needs of that community and I've witnessed his efforts to support others in the legal community, including mentoring young attorneys.

Third, I've witnessed how he and his wife, Lauren, give back to the community, both on Hawai'i Island and here in Honolulu. I first came to know them through their support of the arts, particularly the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra.

I admire Andrew's passion for his work as well as his calm, thoughtful demeanor. I'm pleased that he is seeking this judicial position and that he has been nominated for the Third Circuit. I encourage you to support his nomination and thank you for your attention.

Chris Benjamin

Date: March 27, 2026

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

Re: JC 23, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the District Court of the Third
Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY

Hearing: Thursday, March 31, 2026, 9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & Videoconference
415 South Beretania Street

It is my honor to write this testimony in support of the confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Andrew Michael Kennedy.

I came to know Mr. Kennedy in my capacity as a Deputy Public Defender. His knowledge of the law and his practice of the law is impressive. I believe he will a great addition on the bench.

Again, I support the confirmation of Judicial Nominee, Andrew Michael Kennedy. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony.

Sincerely,

Saisamoa F. Chee
Deputy Public Defender
State of Hawaii

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 7:50:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of the nomination of Andrew Kennedy as a District Court judge for the 3rd Circuit. I've known Andrew since he joined the Public Defender's office. He's a terrific attorney and I believe he will be a great judge.

Thank you,

Sat Freedman

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 8:52:44 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darius Diamond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I had the fortune and honor of learning from Andrew Kennedy as a legal intern at Schleuter, Kwiat, & Kennedy in 2018. His expertise, exceptional judgment, and legal acumen was apparent to me from the beginning, and the respect he garnered from the attorneys around him was all the more apparent, no matter whether they were co-counsel or opposing counsel. As my mentor, he taught me the true purpose of the lawyer: to defend and uphold the rule of law. More than simply win cases, Andrew demonstrated that the highest caliber of attorney is the one who fully and truly represents the law for the benefit of clients and society alike. He ultimately inspired me to attend law school, and my being a lawyer now is thanks to his example. I have no doubt that Andrew's sharp mind, his ethics based in fairness, justice, and virtue, and his deep knowledge of the law will be a boon to the bench of the State I consider home.

R. HERMANN HEIMGARTNER

ATTORNEY AT LAW LLC



P.O. BOX 1839

KAILUA-KONA, HI 96745

PHONE & TEXT: (808) 756-7022

FAX: (808) 443-0061

EMAIL: HERMANN@KONA.ATTORNEY

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

March 28, 2026

RE: JC 25 – Consideration and Confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit
Judicial Nominee, ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY

IN STRONG SUPPORT

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Hawai'i Senate Committee on the Judiciary,

I am writing to provide strong and positive support for nominee Andrew M. Kennedy for the position of District Court Judge in Kona. I am a 2008 graduate of the University of Hawai'i – William S. Richardson School of Law. After passing the bar, I have worked as a deputy prosecuting attorney on Kauai, as a deputy public defender in West Hawai'i, and as a private attorney since 2015 in Kona. My private practice focuses on State and Federal criminal defense, and I routinely accept State and Federal court appointed cases.

I have known Mr. Kennedy since approximately 2012. He joined the Kona office of the Office of the Public Defender while I was working there in the felony division. I worked with Mr. Kennedy for approximately two years until I started my private law office in 2015. I have seen Mr. Kennedy represent clients and appear in court countless number of times. He is a great attorney, and it is easy to tell that his clients appreciate him.

In addition to being a great attorney, I would like to point out three additional reasons for strongly recommending Mr. Kennedy for District Court judge. First, Mr. Kennedy is very passionate about the rule of law and justice. As a judge, he will surely treat all parties fairly and equally under the rule of law. Second, Mr. Kennedy has a great temperament and personality. He relates well to people from different walks of life. He is also patient and kind to persons. Third, Mr. Kennedy is dedicated to serving our community. He has lead the West Hawai'i Bar Association as president, served on Hawai'i's jury instruction committees, represented the CJA Hawai'i district, and volunteered for numerous bar/legal activities, such as the Kona Self-Help Center and We the People high school civics competition. He has also accepted many court appointed cases, which is an important service to ensure that indigent defendants have representation in court.

For these reasons, I strongly support ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY for District Court Judge in Kona.

Sincerely,

R. Hermann Heimgartner

JOHN KNOEBBER

Attorney at Law

bigislandattorney@gmail.com

P.O. Box 390466 · Keauhou, Hawai'i 96739 · (808) 895-6172

March 28, 2026

Re: Letter of Support for Andrew Kennedy,
District Court of the Third Circuit

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you in support of Andrew Kennedy for District Court Judge of the Third Circuit.

I first met Mr. Kennedy while serving as a law clerk for the Honorable Elizabeth A. Strance, former Circuit Court Judge of the Third Circuit. During my clerkship, I observed firsthand Mr. Kennedy's approach to the practice of law both in and out of courtroom. He was always polite and respectful not only to Judge Strance, but also to me, the court reporters, the filing clerks and the entire judiciary staff. In addition, he fought hard for his clients, filing complex motions and attending evidentiary hearings and jury trials while other attorneys might simply seek out a plea agreement. Also, his work product was always first-rate.

Moreover, Mr. Kennedy is a mentor and friend. Throughout my ten-year career as a solo practitioner in Kona he has gone out of his way to offer his assistance in helping me learn how to be a successful, independent attorney. Specifically, he has advised me on everything from how to organize my accounting records, to how to tackle complex legal issues, and even how to communicate with extremely difficult clients.

More importantly, when I opened my practice in 2015 I had difficulty finding work in Kona, and I considered leaving. However, Mr. Kennedy, before anyone else, called me to encourage me to stay, throw my hat in the ring and start taking court-appointed cases. Having had little litigation experience, I was hesitant, but it was comforting to know that I could rely on Mr. Kennedy to guide me.

In short, in my humble opinion, Mr. Kennedy has set the bar for all attorneys practicing in our community. It is without hesitation that I fully support his nomination for District Court Judge of the Third Circuit.

Sincerely,

/s/ John Knoebber,
Attorney at Law

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 5:25:10 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jauwan Barron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Jauwan Barron 11568

March 28, 2026

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

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of the Appointment of Andrew Michael Kennedy for District Court Judge of the Third Circuit

Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 Time: 9:30 A.M.

Location: Conference Room 016 & Videoconference State Capitol 415 Bertania Street

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Jauwan Barron, and I am a former Deputy Public Defender for the State of Hawai'i and am currently pending admission to practice law in the State of New York. I am writing to express my strong support for the appointment of Andrew Michael Kennedy to the District Court of the Third Circuit.

I have known Andrew Kennedy for approximately three years, a majority of which I was a Deputy Public Defender for the State of Hawai'i. While I didn't work directly with Mr. Kennedy, I first met him during a continuing legal education course (CLE) on the Island of Hawai'i. I told him I was a relatively new attorney and he responded by introducing himself and

immediately offering words of encouragement and advice. He was passionate about zealous advocacy, thorough research of the law and truly understanding the law and policies set in place. Since our initial meeting, Mr. Kennedy has continuously reached out to me to make sure I am meeting my professional goals and am maintaining the standard of a great attorney.

I have no doubt that Mr. Kennedy possesses the exceptional legal ability, integrity, and temperament required of a district court judge. Additionally, I have the utmost confidence that Mr. Kennedy will uphold the independence and integrity of the judiciary. I urge this committee to recommend that the Senate confirm their appointment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully,

Jauwan A. Barron

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 6:17:45 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 9:19:13 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shonali Bhowmik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully and unequivocally support the judicial candidacy of Andrew M. Kennedy, Esq., for the Third Circuit District Court - Kona. I have known Andrew for over 20 years. We met early in our legal careers in New York City and became fast friends.

Andrew is hard working, dedicated, intelligent, morally upstanding and passionate about utilizing the law in service of the common good. If confirmed, Andrew's exceptional drive and enthusiasm for the principled application of the law will continue to serve the Kona community with distinction and integrity.

Respectfully,

Shonali Bhowmik, Esq.

Dina Shek
Honolulu, HI 96822

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 31, 2026 at 9:30am (Room 016)

RE: Support for Andrew Michael Kennedy, Judicial Nominee for the District Court of the Third Circuit (Hawai'i Island – Kona) (JC 25)

Dear Committee Members,

I am pleased to share my strong support for Andrew Kennedy to serve as a judge for the District Court of the Third Circuit (Hawai'i Island – Kona). I am a licensed attorney in Hawai'i and a tenured Faculty Specialist at the William S. Richardson School of Law (University of Hawai'i). My primary role is serving as the Legal Director of the Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i (MLPC), a unique collaboration to provide free, direct legal services at Kōkua Kalihi Valley, a community health center. It is in this capacity that I have known Mr. Kennedy as a dedicated attorney, committed to the ethical and just application of the rule of law.

I first met Mr. Kennedy last year when he was referred to me as a *pro bono* litigator for our Medical-Legal Partnership clients. He quickly said yes to representing five public housing residents facing a deeply flawed redevelopment process, and he proceeded to work closely with our team of lawyers and advocates to file a federal complaint. Because the particular legal issues were a little outside of his primary expertise, Mr. Kennedy engaged in diligent research, careful listening, and thoughtful collaboration. His subsequent communications and negotiations with opposing counsel yielded immediate results, demonstrating his collegiality and professionalism. I believe Mr. Kennedy has the qualities for judicial service, and he would serve with integrity.

Thank you for your consideration of my strong support for Mr. Andrew Kennedy to serve the people of Hawai'i as a judge of the Third Circuit.

Respectfully submitted,



Dina Shek

March 29, 2026

To the Judiciary Committee:

This is a written testimony for the confirmation hearing for Andrew Kennedy for the District Judge, Third Circuit, North & South Kona Division.

My name is Lisa Ciriako. I worked for the judiciary for 42 years before I retired in 2022. I was the supervisor for the District and Family Courts, North & South Kona, North & South Kohala, Ka'u, and Hamakua divisions, at retirement.

Ever since Mr. Kennedy started working for the Public Defender's office in Kona, I have been able to see how he has conducted himself in court. He worked well with the court staff and with his clients. He made sure that each of his clients got a fair deal in whatever their case was about. Mr. Kennedy was one of those very few attorneys that was easy to get along with. He appeared for all court hearings in a timely manner, got cases moved along when our calendars were large, and he didn't complain about it.

It was a loss to the Public Defender's office when he went into the private sector but was always willing to accept court appointments when asked, especially high profile cases.

An elderly aunt of mine, was cited for a traffic petty misdemeanor. I had asked Mr. Kennedy to look at the citation. I wasn't expecting him to appear with her in court, but he did. It wasn't for a lack of money, but Mr. Kennedy did the case pro bono. I am so grateful for his kindness and compassion that he took the time to explain to her and her son the ramifications of the case when they appeared in court.

I believe that Mr. Kennedy will be an excellent District Court judge as he has a lot of knowledge of Hawaii law and has done lots of research on all cases that he has taken.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. Please confirm Mr. Kennedy's nomination for District Court judge of the Third Circuit, North & South Kona Division.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lisa Ciriako

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 8:18:18 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel L. Thompson, Esq.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: JC 25 - confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit, Island of Hawai'i, Judicial Nominee, ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY

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

I would like to submit my personal testimony in support of Andrew Kennedy's nomination for the Third Circuit District Court Judge. Andrew has been a friend and mentor to me since I began practicing in Kona in 2020. I enthusiastically support his nomination to the bench and believe Andrew will be a tremendous asset to the Third Circuit Judiciary.

He is an accomplished litigator and possesses the appropriate judicial temperament to serve as Judge. He is well liked and respected by his colleagues here in West Hawai'i and beyond. Kona District Court will be lucky to have him serve as our next Judge and I look forward to practicing in front of him.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on his nomination.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel L. Thompson, Esq.

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 9:08:39 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Voltaire Gansit, Esq.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong support of the confirmation of Judicial Nominee, Andrew Michael Kennedy, to the District Court of the Third Circuit.

Date: March 29, 2026

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

Re: JC 25, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit, Island of Hawaii, Judicial Nominee, Andrew Michael Kennedy

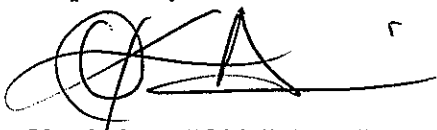
Hearing: Tuesday, March 31, 2026, 9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & Videoconference
415 South Beretania Street

It is my honor to write this testimony in support of the confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit, Island of Hawaii, Judicial Nominee, Andrew Michael Kennedy. I met Mr. Kennedy while serving as deputy public defenders for the State of Hawaii.

Mr. Kennedy possesses the characteristics and skills necessary to be an excellent judge. He possesses a sharp mind and strong legal acumen. As a criminal defense attorney, he zealously advocates for his clients. It is evident in the level of preparation for his cases, he possesses a great work ethic. Mr. Kennedy treats everyone with dignity and respect regardless of status. I have never witnessed him behave or speak in an inappropriate manner.

Again, I support the confirmation of Judicial Nominee, Andrew Michael Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy's confirmation would 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, Andrew Michael Kennedy.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Okie' Amadi, with a stylized circular flourish on the left and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Okechukwu "Okie" Amadi
Deputy Public Defender
State of Hawaii

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 11:48:51 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

I have had the opportunity to know and work with Andrew Kennedy for several years. I worked with him on a lengthy jury trial that lasted two months. During that time, I have seen his work ethic and temperament, both of which will serve the judiciary well. Not only was he diligent in his trial preparation, but he was also a team player, helping out other co-counsel when needed.

Even before working with him on this particular case, Mr. Kennedy had on previous occasions offered his help and knowledge on federal cases as I started my practice in that area. He responded to my email request with shared motions and follow up calls. What struck me was his genuine enthusiasm for the law and the legal profession.

Mr. Kennedy will be the kind of judge that is prepared, knowledgeable and courteous to both sides. I fully support his nomination to the district court.

Thank you,

Doris Lum

75-5660 Kopiko St. Suite C-7 #444
Kailua-Kona, HI. 96740

(808) 464-4440
wahmow@hawaii.rr.com



Hawaii State License PD #1134
License, Insured, Bonded

March 30, 2026

Aloha Honorable Chair Karl Rhoads, Honorable Vice Chair Mike Gabbard. and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

It is my honor to write this letter of recommendation in support of Mr. Andrew Michael Kennedy who was appointed by Acting Chief Justice Sabrina S. McKenna for a position in the District Court of the Third Circuit (Hawai'i Island – Kona).

I am a retired Hawaii County Police Department Detective with more than 29 years of service. During my career with the department, I have worked on numerous court cases where the opposing defense counsel was Mr. Andrew Kennedy – Public Defender; and throughout that time, I have always observed the highest standards of professionalism and integrity with determining the "Facts & Evidence" for each case.

Mr. Kennedy is now a partner with Schlueter, Kwiat & Kennedy, LLP and in 2019, I obtained my Private Detective License in the State of Hawaii which re-connected our careers once again. As a Private Detective, Mr. Kennedy has retained my services for assistance in both State and Federal cases. While working with him during my time with the Department and privately, I can confidently say that he demonstrates a deep understanding of the law and approaches each case with thorough preparation and sound judgement. He possesses the ability to be impartial and listen to all parties prior to rendering a decision.

Beyond his professional qualifications, he also possesses a genuine commitment to serve his community and has a strong moral character. With this, I offer my highest recommendation for Mr. Kennedy. I am confident that he will serve with fairness, distinction and with the utmost integrity.

Mr. Kennedy would make an excellent District Court Judge for the island of Hawai'i and for the people who live, work and make the Big Island their home.

Sincerely,

Walter K. Ah Mow III

Private Detective

(Retired Police Detective – Hawai'i County Police Department)

Hon. Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Hon. Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Hon. Members of the Committee on Judiciary

Re: JC25 – Confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit, Island of
Hawai'i, Judicial Nominee, Andrew Michael Kennedy

Dear Madams and Sirs:

I write to strongly recommend the nomination of Andrew Kennedy to the District Court Judge of the Third Circuit Court. I know Mr. Kennedy both professionally and personally, and submit this recommendation with no reservation.

I first worked with Mr. Kennedy in a complex securities fraud litigation beginning in 2002 in a case entitled *In re: Initial Public Offerings Securities Litigation* in the Southern District of New York. This work required tremendous attention to detail as we reviewed Securities and Exchange Filings of publicly traded companies and compared them to financial and other public statements made by the companies. Mr. Kennedy and I worked closely on this project many hours a day, and Mr. Kennedy's work was instrumental in achieving a significant result for shareholders.

Since that time, I have maintained contact with Mr. Kennedy including his move to Hawaii. There has been no stronger proponent of the island than Mr. Kennedy since his arrival, and he has devoted himself to helping its citizens both through his legal work and personal dealings.

I know Mr. Kennedy to be an honorable man, and one that possesses the proper temperament to serve effectively as a judge.

I am happy to discuss my recommendation personally with any committee member who may want to know more.

Sincerely,

Randall K. Pulliam

THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Date: March 31, 2026

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Re: JC 25, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit, Island of Hawai'i, Judicial Nominee, ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

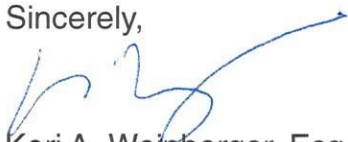
I am writing to express my strong support for the selection of Andrew Kennedy for the position of District Court Judge in Kona. I have known Andrew for nearly twelve years, and in that time, I have had the opportunity to become familiar with his professional work, his character, and his reputation in the West Hawai'i legal community. I am confident that Andrew possesses the experience, judgement, and integrity necessary to serve on the bench.

When I first met Andrew in 2014, he was a Deputy Public Defender with the Kona Office of the Public Defender. Between 2016 - 2021, I was a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for the County of Hawai'i, where I encountered Andrew as opposing counsel. In court, Andrew demonstrated a thorough command of the law and an ability to strategize and respond effectively in fast-moving courtroom settings. Andrew is one of the most skilled and zealous defense attorneys I have ever met, and he always conducts himself with integrity and professionalism in his dealings with opposing counsel and the court.

As a judge, I know that Andrew will ensure that the rights of litigants appearing before him are protected and that he will administer justice with fairness and impartiality. He also has the experience and temperament to run a busy District Court calendar with efficiency. Andrew's commitment to public service has been demonstrated by his years working as a public defender; since going into private practice, he has remained committed to serving the public by accepting many court appointments for indigent defendants in both state and federal court.

For these reasons, I strongly support Andrew Kennedy's selection for the Kona District Court bench. I am confident that he will serve with distinction and will uphold the highest standards of judicial conduct. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Weinberger', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kori A. Weinberger, Esq.

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:36:14 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Carkin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of judicial nominee Andrew Kennedy. Andrew is kind, thoughtful, fair, intelligent, and dilligent. He is committed to the Island of Hawaii and will make an excellent District Court judge if appointed.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Allison Carkin

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:51:34 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Craig Jerome	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to recommend Andrew M. Kennedy for the position of District Judge for the District Court of the Third Circuit. Mr. Kennedy is an exceedingly accomplished attorney who has provided tremendous service to his clients and the courts. He would be an incredible asset to the judiciary.

I have worked closely with Mr. Kennedy in his role as a member of the U.S. District Court's Criminal Justice Act (CJA) panel. The CJA panel is the group of highly qualified lawyers who represent indigent criminal defendants in Hawai'i federal court when there is a conflict with the Office of the Federal Defender. In my opinion, Mr. Kennedy is one of the finest advocates on the CJA panel. He consistently and enthusiastically takes on the toughest cases and the most challenging clients. He is personable (seemingly able to communicate effectively with anyone), diligent, and courageous. He also works as hard as anyone I know. Indeed, I often see him visiting clients at the local detention facility at night and on weekends, even though he lives on a neighbor island and must fly in to do so.

Mr. Kennedy's work on behalf of his state and federal clients is uniformly excellent—whether at trial, at sentencing, or on appeal. He also serves as a CJA panel representative for our district, taking on unpaid work for the benefit of our court and his fellow attorneys. Last year a gap in federal funding meant that our CJA panel attorneys went for several months without being paid for the work that they performed. During that time, Mr. Kennedy continued to take on difficult and complicated federal court-appointed cases without hesitancy or complaint. It was a very concrete example of the personal sacrifice he was willing to make to ensure that the Constitution continued to function as intended even for those who could not afford to pay for private counsel.

Mr. Kennedy has the skills, experience, and personal traits that would make for an excellent judge. As his clients have for many years, we would all benefit from his service.

Aloha,

Craig W. Jerome

HAYLEY Y.C. CHENG

First Deputy Public Defender

Office of the Public Defender
1130 N. Nimitz Hwy, Suite A-254
Honolulu, HI 96817
(808) 586-2208

March 30, 2026

JC 25: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the Third Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY:

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

My name is Hayley Y.C. Cheng, and I submit this testimony in my personal capacity in strong support of the nomination of Andrew Kennedy to serve as a District Court Judge for the State of Hawai'i.

I have had the privilege of working alongside Andrew when he served as a Deputy Public Defender. During that time, I came to know him as an exceptionally hardworking, respected, and zealous advocate for his clients. He consistently approached his cases with diligence, integrity, and a deep commitment to ensuring that every individual he represented was treated fairly within our justice system.

Since transitioning into private practice, Andrew has broadened his experience significantly. He has handled matters across a wide range of state court proceedings and has also gained valuable experience in federal court. This breadth of practice has given him a well-rounded perspective that will serve him well on the bench, allowing him to thoughtfully consider the diverse legal and factual issues that come before the District Court.

Beyond his professional work, Andrew has remained deeply committed to the legal community. For several years, he has generously devoted his personal time to mentoring young attorneys. He has instructed at the Public Defender Seminar and served on the Public Defender Council, helping to guide and support the next generation of advocates. This dedication speaks volumes about his character and his commitment to the profession.

Equally important, Andrew possesses the temperament that is essential for a judge. He is warm, approachable, and respectful in his interactions with others. These

qualities foster trust and confidence, both in the courtroom and among colleagues, and are critical to maintaining the integrity and dignity of the judiciary.

Based on my firsthand experience working with Andrew, as well as my continued observation of his professional growth and contributions, I am confident that he will be a fair, thoughtful, and effective judge. He brings not only strong legal ability, but also the judgment, humility, and compassion that are essential for those entrusted with judicial authority.

I respectfully urge this Committee to confirm his nomination.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hayley Y.C. Cheng

LATE

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 11:14:35 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Gibson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairperson Rhoades, Vice Chairperson Gabbard, and esteemed members of the Hawaii Senate Committee on the Judiciary:

I write to express my enthusiastic support for the consideration and confirmation of Andrew M. Kennedy for the position of Kona District Court Judge.

Mr. Kennedy is a remarkable leader. In our adversarial system, it is especially valuable to have individuals like him who work to bring people from both sides of the aisle together to focus on working for the common good. He is never too busy to listen to a colleague, brainstorm a problem, or offer guidance. He is often the first to step in to help when someone is in need.

Mr. Kennedy has a brilliant legal mind, a keen sense of humor, and a genuine compassion for others, as evidenced by his commitment to representing indigent defendants for many years. He pursues excellence in whatever he does, and by doing so, he raises the bar for the rest of us.

Mr. Kennedy is an asset to our community and will serve with honor, fairness, and an unwavering commitment to the rule of law. Thank you for considering him to serve in this important role.

Sincerely,

Catherine Gibson

THE LAW OFFICE OF BENJAMIN E. LOWENTHAL
1001 Bishop Street, Suite 2210
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Telephone: (808) 766-8247
Email: benjamin@bellawyer.com

LATE

March 30, 2026

Hawai'i Senate

Re: Strong Support for Andrew Kennedy as our next Third Circuit
District Court Judge

Dear Senators,

I hope that Andrew M. Kennedy becomes the next District Court Judge in Kona. Kona needs a district court judge with Mr. Kennedy's experience, courtesy, and patience.

Mr. Kennedy and I became friends when I was at the public defender's office in Honolulu, when he would come over frequently for his federal cases. We soon became friends. He was enthusiastic about practicing law, discussing difficult legal issues, and showed great interest in developing the trial lawyers at the public defender's office. At the office, we also bonded over neighbor island experiences.

Mr. Kennedy cares about Kona and the attorneys who practice there. He always finds time to help attorneys improve their skills in the courtroom—whether they are defense attorneys, prosecutors, or civil practitioners. He does it because he wants to see people on the Big Island receive top-notch legal services.

That is why I believe he will make a fine judge. His intelligence, affability, and ability to communicate effectively make him an accomplished and sought after lawyer. Those same skills will do well on the bench.

His empathy will also help tremendously. As a judge, Mr. Kennedy will demand excellence from the attorneys who appear before them because his community deserves excellent legal services. He is also patient with his clients and others who find themselves caught in a complex and harsh legal system. I've seen that first hand in the way he communicates with his clients.

THE LAW OFFICE OF BENJAMIN E. LOWENTHAL

1001 Bishop Street, Suite 2210

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Telephone: (808) 766-8247

Email: benjamin@bellawyer.com

Mr. Kennedy understands the mission of the Judiciary is to administer justice within the rule of law. And he knows that furthering the mission will instill public confidence in our Judiciary—something badly needed these days. Please appoint him to be Kona's next judge.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Benjamin Lowenthal

Benjamin E. Lowenthal

LATE

JC-25

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 6:21:41 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trisha Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To The Honorable Committee on the Judiciary, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

Please send JC 25 to the floor to confirm Mr. Andrew Kennedy as a District Court Judge of the Third Circuit.

I am licensed to practice law in the State and work as an Assistant Specialist Faculty at the William S. Richardson School of Law. (Please note this letter is sent in my personal capacity and does not represent the views of the Law School or University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.)

I have known Andrew Kennedy for more than a decade when we met through the Office of the Public Defender. Despite us both leaving the Public Defender’s Office for other work, we stayed in touch. Andrew joined the Hawai‘i State Bar Association’s Diversity, Equity, and Access to the Law (“HSBA DEAL”) Committee when I co-chaired it. Andrew steps up to consult or represent others in civil matters on a pro bono basis. Andrew is steady, committed, and shows up for people, qualities that will suit him well as a district court judge. He has appeared in criminal and civil matters, served on the Defender Council, and volunteered with the Hawai‘i State Bar Association in many facets. Not all attorneys lead or take on the “hard stuff.” Andrew does both. He steps up when folks need him to and he remarkably always find a way to make space and time for his communities (Kona, the Bar, to name a few) and also his clients (flying frequently to meet with clients at the Federal Detention Center and making appearances in court, particularly federal court most recently).

Recently, a colleague was interested in having an attorney assist on a time-sensitive critical client matter. The case was on O‘ahu. The case was not an easy one. The case was not one that would bring Andrew accolades. But when he learned about the matter, Andrew not surprisingly took it on because it was about justice and giving voice to those who needed help. Andrew shows up. When our HSBA DEAL Committee wanted to expand its reach throughout the State, Andrew stepped up. I called him and shared that it was important we make sure that we had representation from West Hawai‘i.

Bar and the Courts. And when the annual Access to Justice High School Pro Bono Essay Contest happens, Andrew has ensured his firm supports the award for the high school student in West Hawai‘i who has been selected for their essay about volunteerism, and the award for the teacher.

While a seemingly small gesture, this support speaks volumes about Andrew's selfless support of community and lifting up others in West Hawai'i. And certainly not the least important, Andrew has a love and passion for the law and understand its impacts on people. If I were to guess, the work of a District Court Judge is extremely taxing and hard. Seeing the same kinds of cases, listening to people's emotional pleas for help when seeking protective orders or smaller monetary remedies, and overseeing changes of pleas, conduct bail hearings, and sentencing individual criminal defendants for similar criminal offenses over and over again might make one jaded. As a District Court Judge, Andrew would hear every party, listen carefully and attentively, and look at the law and apply it fairly. He would not take "little" cases lightly; he would view every case as one that was important to an individual party. He would serve with the understanding that the role of the Court is extremely important and that the position requires integrity.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

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

Andrew M. Kennedy
District Court Judge of the Third Circuit (JC25)

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

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

Hearing: Tuesday, March 31, 2026, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 016 and Videoconference
State Capitol

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) Board of Directors' comments on JC25, Nomination of Andrew Kennedy for the District Court of the Third Circuit.

After a rigorous process, described below, the HSBA Board of Directors concluded that Mr. Kennedy is **QUALIFIED**. Mr. Kennedy has extensive trial and litigation experience and has a proven background in public service and volunteerism. Recently, Mr. Kennedy was awarded the HSBA Kie Kie award for his pro bono service in representing public housing residents who were being displaced. Mr. Kennedy is currently serving on the HSBA Board of Directors. It should be noted that his judicial nomination materials, interview, and references were treated equally as all judicial nominees.

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.
- Mr. Kennedy submitted documentation, which was reviewed, and the references listed were contacted for their personal opinions and

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Leslie A. Hayashi

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Catherine A. Betts

observations. The comments and letters received from HSBA members reflected an affirmation of Mr. Kennedy in all categories of the 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 Mr. Kennedy on March 24, 2026, to discuss the subcommittee's findings.
- On March 25, 2026, the HSBA Board of Directors interviewed Mr. Kennedy in executive session.
- The HSBA Board deliberated and voted that Mr. Kennedy was qualified.

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