

Tuesday, October 23, 2007: Testimony List

**Committee on Human Services and Public Housing (HSP)
Notice of Hearing**

**Relating to Rene Berthiaume, Confirmation to the Board of
Directors of the Hawaiian Public Housing Authority**

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Linda L. Smith, Senior Policy Advisor
Office of the Governor, State of Hawaii | Supports |
| 2. Anne Yamamoto, Executive Director
Workforce Development Council | Supports |
| 3. George S. Massengale, Policy Director
Tobacco-Free Hawaii | Supports |
| 4. R. Eric Beaver, Vice-Chair
Board Of Directors
Hawaii Public Housing Authority | Supports |



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

October 19, 2007

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
State Capitol, Room 226
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland:

I am writing in support of the appointment of Rene Berthiaume to the Board of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA). Mr. Berthiaume is exactly the kind of person who can assist the State of Hawaii in meeting its goals of improving public housing and addressing the problem of homelessness in our state.

During the past several months I have had the opportunity to serve with Mr. Berthiaume as a fellow member of this HPHA board.

Rene Berthiaume immediately became a contributing member of the Board and recently briefed us on an exciting program sponsored by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development called Step Up. This program allows homeless persons to help in the renovation and repairs of public housing units in exchange for getting an opportunity to occupy those units. Rene represents the disabled community on our board and has been a leader in working with those who have disabilities to give them skills and professions that are much needed in our workforce. He is a role model of service and support to those not as fortunate as us.

I hope you will support and recommend the confirmation of Rene Berthiaume to the HPHA Board. Regrettably, I will be on the Mainland when the confirmation hearing takes place. Should you have any questions regarding my support for this Board member, please feel free to contact me on my cell phone at 497-7895.

Sincerely,

LINDA L. SMITH
Senior Policy Advisor



**STATE OF HAWAII
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

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October 23, 2007

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

From: Ann Yamamoto, Executive Director
Workforce Development Council

**Subject: Rene Berthiaume, Confirmation to the
Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority**
Hearing Tuesday, October 23, 2007; 1:15 PM; Conference Room 016

The staff of the Workforce Development Council ("WDC") strongly supports the appointment of Rene Berthiaume to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

We have worked with Mr. Berthiaume for several years now, on a number of different matters primarily related to his work as Chair of the State Vocational Rehabilitation Council, a group similar to the Workforce Development Council. Mr. Berthiaume is an excellent Chair. Both the Vocational Rehabilitation Council and WDC benefit from his extensive knowledge and experience advocating for people with disabilities in every conceivable venue; at the county, state, and national levels. For instance, in the 2006 and 2007 legislative sessions, WDC joined Mr. Berthiaume in an effort to attain a government procurement preference for businesses that hire people with disabilities. His energy and dedication on this matter was infectious, as he pursued and won the support of legislators, government agencies and opposing individuals. There is no doubt that in due time, this measure will pass. There is also no doubt that Mr. Berthiaume will bring the same vigor to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

Mr. Berthiaume's passion for the betterment of the lives of people with disabilities is unparalleled. We urge you to appoint Mr. Berthiaume to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Yamamoto".

**George S. Massengale
1500 S. Beretania Street, Suite 309
Honolulu, HI 96826**

**COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair, Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
DATE: October 22, 2007
FAX: 586-6659
TO: Senate Sergeant-At-Arms**

**Hearing Date: Tuesday, October 23m 2007, 1:15 PM, Conference Rm. 016.
1 copy, mahalo.**

**Testimony in support of Rene Berthiaume to the Hawaii Public
Housing Authority**

Chair Chun-Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara and member of the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing. Because of travel to the mainland, I am unable to testify in person on behalf of Mr. Berthiaume and his appointment by Governor Lingle, to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

Many of you know me as the Policy Director for the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawaii, and part-time lobbyist for the Hawaii Audubon Society. Some of you are aware that I have known and worked with Mr. Berthiaume for over 30 years and personally know of the outstanding work that he has done in advancing job opportunities and housing for Hawaii's handicapped residents and other less fortunate individuals as well. There is no doubt in my mind that he will bring to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority, the same standard of dedication that he has so ably demonstrated over the years as the Chair of Hawaii's Rehabilitation Service Council, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Administrator, and as a Group Home Housing Developer.

As we all know the issue of affordable housing will be reaching crisis proportions in the very near future. Addressing this issue over the next several years will be a

daunting one in which the Hawaii Public Housing Authority will play a crucial role.

This will include:

- Ensuring that existing housing units continue to be maintained and improved;
- Improving our capacity to help the homeless;
- Enhancing our rental assistance program;
- Strengthening our communities, and **most importantly of all;**
- **Facilitating the development of affordable housing.**

Rene possesses the knowledge, experience, and collaborative skills that will optimize the Public Housing Authorities ability to maintain and expand existing program services. As an appointee to the Public Housing Authority, Rene, will become a very strong voice and advocate for the beneficiaries of Public Housing Authority services.

I would strongly urge the committee to vote to ratify Mr. Berthiaume's appointment to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

Respectfully,



George S. Massengale

cc: Rene Berthiaume

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

VIA FACSIMILE 586-6131

Chair Suzanne Chun Oakland
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing
Hawaii State Legislature

Dear Chair Chun Oakland:

I am submitting written testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Rene Berthiaume to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA). As the Vice-Chair of the Board, I am confident that Mr. Berthiaume's extensive background in generating housing opportunities for homeless veterans and special needs individuals will bring a renewed sense of duty to the agency in the area of providing high quality service to the most vulnerable members of our state.

This nominee will not only be able to draw upon over thirty years of expertise and knowledge, but I also believe that Mr. Berthiaume's sense of professionalism in conjunction with his commitment to create new avenues for change will help the Hawaii Public Housing Authority develop transformational and highly effective policies. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of Mr. Berthiaume's nomination.

Sincerely,



R. Eric Beaver
Vice-Chair, Board of Directors
Hawaii Public Housing Authority