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Testimony



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

CHRISTINE E. KURIYAMA
Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
The Honorable Clayton Hee, Chair
The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice-Chair

From: Calvin E. Young
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Monday, October 20, 2014 at 11:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016
State Capitol

The Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the nomination of Christine E. Kuriyama for the position of Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit.

On October 8th, after learning that Governor Neil Abercrombie had nominated Judge Kuriyama to the bench, the HSBA began its judicial nomination review process. The HSBA membership was notified of the nomination and was asked to comment. Included in this email transmission were the qualification criteria used for the nomination review process: integrity & diligence, legal knowledge & ability, professional experience, judicial temperament, financial responsibility, public service, health, and the ability to fulfill the responsibilities & duties required of the position, the assurance of confidentiality and a deadline to submit their comments no later than October 13th.

Attorneys who submitted less than positive observations were contacted by the Executive Director and were encouraged to provide additional elaboration or clarifying information. These attorneys were again assured of confidentiality unless disclosure of their identity was authorized.

Simultaneous to these actions, I appointed a subcommittee of three (3) HSBA Board members to review the comments received (identifying information is removed unless the attorney authorized disclosure); contact references provided by the nominee and others who have knowledge of the nominee's experience and qualifications; and review documentation provided by the nominee.

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TESTIMONY

Nomination of Christine E. Kuriyama

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I scheduled a Special HSBA Board meeting to review the judicial nominations of Judge Kuriyama, as well as the nominations of Mr. Crabtree and Ms. Masunaga for October 16th and to interview the respective nominees.

Prior to the October 16th Board meeting, the HSBA Executive Director and I met with Judge Kuriyama at 3:00 p.m. on October 15th to discuss the HSBA nomination procedure and to apprise her of any less than positive concerns or issues raised by responding HSBA members. A document noting the HSBA qualification review criteria and any qualification criteria in question was provided to Judge Kuriyama.

On October 16th the full HSBA Board met to review materials submitted by Judge Kuriyama and others as well as documentation prepared by the subcommittee, and to conduct the interview of the Judge.

Taking into consideration all of the information presented by and about the nominee and the interview with the nominee, the Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association finds Christine E. Kuriyama to be qualified for the position of Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit.

JOHN C. BRYANT, JR., LLLC

Attorney at Law

LYNNE M. YOUMANS
(Of Counsel)

700 BISHOP STREET, SUITE 1031
HONOLULU, HI 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 356-2840
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www.HawaiiDivorceAttorneys.com

October 17, 2014

By E-Mail to JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate, State of Hawaii

Re: Circuit Court Judicial Nominee Christine E. Kuriyama

Dear Chair Hee and Vice Chair Shimabukuro:

I am writing to strongly support Judge Christine E. Kuriyama for the position of Circuit Court Judge for the First Circuit. She has proven herself to be more than capable of handling the duties and responsibilities associated with a Circuit Court Judge.

I had the pleasure of working with Judge Kuriyama in Family Court from 1995 to 2002 when I left the Family Court bench. Judge Kuriyama was always professional and collegial. She worked extremely well with her fellow Family Court judges and the Family Court staff.

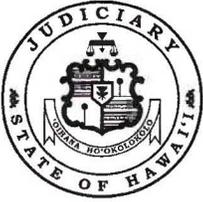
Since I left the bench in 2002, I have appeared before Judge Kuriyama many times as a Family Court practitioner. She is always well prepared. And just as important, she truly cares about the people and families who appear before her. She is compassionate, never angry or rude.

She will make an outstanding Circuit Court Judge, and I highly recommend that the Committee on Judiciary and Labor confirm her appointment. Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Very truly yours,



JOHN C. BRYANT, JR.



First Circuit - Court Services - Judicial Services Branch

THE JUDICIARY • STATE OF HAWAII • RONALD T. Y. MOON KAPOLEI COURTHOUSE 4675 KAPOLEI PARKWAY • KAPOLEI, HAWAII 96707-3272

Lori Ann M. Okita
CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Calvin C. Ching
DEPUTY CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

October 14, 2014

The Honorable Clayton Hee
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Comment in Support of Christine E. Kuriyama, Judicial Appointee for the Circuit Court of the First Circuit

Dear Senator Hee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter in strong support of Christine Kuriyama's judicial appointment to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

We have had the privilege and pleasure of working with Judge Kuriyama for a number of years at Family Court where she has been a full-time District Family Court judge in the First Circuit since May of 2004. Prior to this, she served as a per diem Family Court judge for 9 years, and therefore, has almost 20 years of judicial experience. Her many years of experience on the bench is invaluable as it has allowed her to develop all the necessary judicial skills that will make her a very experienced adjudicator on the Circuit Court level. Judge Kuriyama is very professional in court, always well-prepared, and has an excellent demeanor and judicial temperament. She handles all her cases with efficiency and fairness.

Judge Christine Kuriyama possesses the knowledge, character, dedication, and extensive experience that will enable her to serve the people of Hawaii well as an excellent Circuit Court Judge.

Thank you very much for your consideration and for allowing us this opportunity to share our comments with you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Becke S. Kubo in black ink.

Becke S. Kubo
Court Administrator, Judicial Services Branch

Handwritten signature of Karen A. Ho in black ink.

Karen A. Ho
Administrative Assistant

KIDS FIRST
RONALD T.Y. MOON KAPOLEI COURT
4675 Kapolei Parkway
Kapolei, Hawai'i 96707
Telephone: (808) 954-8280

October 10, 2014

Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Judge Christine Kuriyama

Dear Senator Hee:

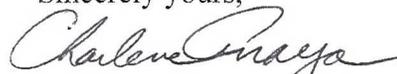
Please confirm the nomination of Judge Christine Kuriyama for the position of Circuit Court Judge of the First Judicial Circuit. It is with mixed feelings that I recommend Judge Kuriyama, as her nomination would mean that the Family Court would lose one of our best judges. However, Judge Kuriyama is very deserving of being elevated and should be given this opportunity.

In my capacity as Kids First program director I have worked with Judge Kuriyama for the past 15 years. She was among the few judges who welcomed families at the Kids First program, staying late on Wednesdays beyond her work day. Judge Kuriyama is always approachable and is concerned about the well-being of all who work with her.

Judge Kuriyama handles a high volume of cases, has excellent legal skills, maintains a calm judicial demeanor, and she is well-respected for her leadership skills. We, the staff at Kids First know that Judge Kuriyama is sincerely concerned about all families who appear in court.

Judge Christine Kuriyama is a person of sound character and high integrity, the necessary qualifications to be an excellent Circuit Court judge. I highly recommend her nomination.

Sincerely yours,



Charlene D. Anaya
Kids First Director



HAWAII FAMILY SUPPORT INSTITUTE
Making Hawaii's Families Strong

October 14, 2014

Senator Clayton Hee, Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary and Labor
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Nomination of Judge Kuriyama to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit

Dear Senator Hee,

This letter is in support of confirmation of Judge Christine Kuriyama to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. Judge Kuriyama has been a driving force in successfully establishing the important Honolulu Zero to Three Court for infants and toddlers involved in the child welfare service system. This national model court program was established in 2008 and under Judge Kuriyama's leadership has met its goals very well in the first years. With the loss of federal funding, she helped to move the initiative under the Family Drug Court and obtained a significant three year SAMHSA grant award to continue services.

In addition to her leadership skills, Judge Kuriyama possesses a keen intellect, capacity for attention to detail, and poise under pressure. Perhaps most importantly she has a good grasp of the complex problems involved among those entering the judicial system. Through her experience of the Honolulu Zero to Three Court, she understands intergenerational transmission of trauma and dysfunction; and the long-term impact of abuse, neglect, and other adverse childhood experiences (ACE) factors upon young children. As many cases seen by the courts involve intergenerational trauma, she will be able to ensure that parties understand the legal process in which they are involved and that court-ordered consequences will appropriately address the needs of both victims and perpetrators. Judge Kuriyama's long experience with issues pertinent to her Zero to Three cases will continue to have a positive impact on our community if she is appointed to the Circuit Court.

Judge Kuriyama is a person of high integrity and competence and would be a tremendous asset to the First Circuit Court.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Gail Breakey'.

Gail Breakey, RN, MPH, Executive Director,
Hawaii Family Support Institute
MBT School of Social Work



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

Office of the President & CEO ▪ 1301 Punchbowl Street ▪ Honolulu, HI 96813 ▪ (808) 691-4688 ▪ FAX: (808) 691-7801

October 14, 2014

The Honorable Clayton Hee
Chair, Judiciary and Labor Committee
Hawaii State Senate
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Hee:

Re: Recommendation for The Honorable Christine E. Kuriyama, Circuit Courts

I am very honored and pleased to offer a letter of support, recommending Judge Christine E. Kuriyama to serve as judge in the Circuit Courts, First Circuit. Since 2004, Judge Kuriyama has served full-time in the District Family Court and has extensive judicial experiences, dealing with a broad array of cases within the Family Court divisions and is currently serving as Lead Judge in the Domestic Division.

In addition to her current duties, Judge Kuriyama serves as the presiding judge of the Hawaii Zero to Three Court, a Family Court Specialty Court, focusing on the needs of infants and toddlers involved in the child welfare system. She is also responsible for the Oahu Child Welfare Mediation Program, which deals with child abuse and neglect cases. She co-chairs the Chapter 587A Task Force, assigned to rewrite the Hawaii Revised Statutes Child Protective Act to bring the statute in compliance with federal regulations.

Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Kuriyama has had extensive experiences in private arbitrations and civil litigation and served as a partner in two Honolulu law firms dealing with product liability, defense, commercial litigation and appellate work. She has also served as Deputy Attorney General for the State of Hawaii and as an administrator for the Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

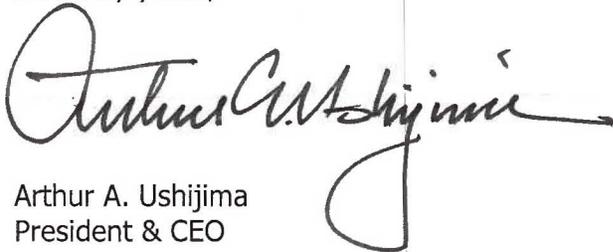
In 2013, in recognition of her many accomplishments and dedication in the District Family Court, she was honored by the Hawaii Women Lawyers with their Outstanding Judicial Achievement Award.

Serving on the bench requires skills of discernment and clarity and personal attributes of integrity, objectivity and wisdom, supported by a broad array of relevant experiences. A goal of the judicial system is the resolution of legal issues with efficiency, effectiveness and fairness, applying and interpreting the law with discernment and wisdom. Judge Kuriyama has clearly demonstrated extraordinary leadership and capabilities as a judge and attorney over many years. She is a person of great humility, integrity and honesty. She is dedicated to public

service and to the well-being of our community.

The Circuit Courts would greatly benefit from the appointment of Judge Kuriyama. She would bring her reputation of fairness, integrity and dedication to this role and would greatly enhance the work of the Court. I personally know Judge Kuriyama very well; she is a genuinely sincere and dedicated professional. She is strong and firm but is also very caring and compassionate. She has extensive experiences in government, private practice and is a long-tenured member of the Judiciary. She will be a tremendous asset to our judicial system with her appointment to the Circuit Courts. I very pleased and honored to recommend her.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arthur A. Ushijima". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Arthur A. Ushijima
President & CEO

Saccoccio & Lopez
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Paul H. Saccoccio
Admitted Hawaii and New York

Marianita Lopez
Admitted Hawaii and New York

October 11, 2014

Clayton Hee
Chairman
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, District 23
Hawaii State Legislature Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: The Honorable Christine Kuriyama
Judge of the Family Court, First Circuit

Dear Chairman Hee:

I write this letter in support of Judge Christine Kuriyama's nomination for Circuit Court judge of the First Circuit.

I am an attorney licensed to practice law in Hawaii. In the past 15 years I have regularly appeared before Judge Kuriyama in Family Court. Judge Kuriyama has presided on my cases of adoption, divorce, guardianship, Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act, Child Protective Act, and various miscellaneous matters.

Many of these matters have been contested so I have had an opportunity to hear her rulings on evidentiary issues as well her final orders. Judge Kuriyama understands the law and the evidence and issues orders that are consistent with the law and the facts of the matter. She asks questions of the attorneys that sometimes lead us to consider the matter in a different light, often resulting in settlements.

At the risk of sounding sexist, Judge Kuriyama speaks softly and graciously from the bench. This is not to say that she doesn't carry a big stick when required; she is not a pushover in the least. Even at times when a situation has been presented to her in a manner where I was sure any other judge would pull her hair out and stomp off the bench, she has maintained her control and has responded with equanimity.

Clayton Hee
October 11, 2014
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In a forum where much of our work involves dealing with families who are in the throes of disruption or entirely breaking up, Judge Kuriyama is kind to the litigants before her, whether she rules for or against them.

Judge Kuriyama is a hard worker. On one of my particularly difficult UCCJEA cases, which requires our judge to communicate with a judge of another state, sometimes a state with a 6-hour time difference, Judge Kuriyama exerted great efforts to initiate the communication with, what seemed to me, an uncooperative judge from the other state. She issues orders and decisions immediately from the bench, but when she does not but takes them "under advisement" they are later timely entered.

I have the greatest respect for Judge Kuriyama and wholeheartedly support her nomination for a position as a Circuit Court judge, although it means losing an experienced, hardworking, knowledgeable and kind judge from our Family Court bench.

Sincerely,

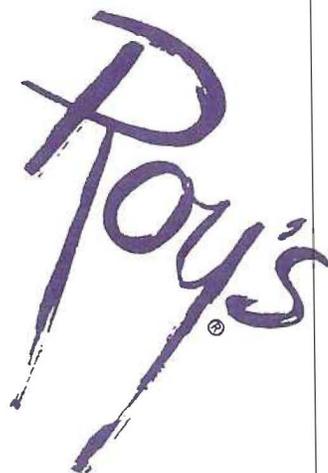


MARIANITA LOPEZ

ML:ms

hee.10.11.14ltr

October 14, 2014



The Honorable Clayton Hee
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street, Room 407
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Senator Hee:

We are writing in support of Judge Christine Kuriyama's application for Circuit Court Judge. We have known Tina well for the past eight years and can personally attest to her dedication to public service as a family court judge. Judge Kuriyama is highly intelligent, fair and honest, and what truly makes her an outstanding candidate for this position is her compassion and heart to always do what's right. She takes her job seriously and cares about our community, giving her own time beyond the hours of her job to protect our youngest and most vulnerable *keiki*.

We would appreciate your consideration of our support and endorsement of Judge Kuriyama for the position of Circuit Court Judge. We believe that she will continue to serve the people of Hawaii with integrity, fairness and honor.

Respectfully Yours,



Roy Yamaguchi
Chef/Owner



Denise Hayashi Yamaguchi

Roy's Restaurant

6600 Kalaniana'ole Hwy.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96825

Tel: (808) 396-ROY'S (7697)
FAX: (808) 396-8706

Angelique N. Sanada
2754 Kuilei Street, Apt. 1905
Honolulu, Hawaii 96826

October 10, 2014

Senator Clayton Hee
Chair of the Judiciary and Labor Committee
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Hee:

I am writing to strongly support the confirmation of Family Court Judge Christine Kuriyama as a Circuit Court Judge in the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. I have known and worked with Judge Kuriyama for many years, and I find her to be intelligent, honest, diligent and hard working. Judge Kuriyama is one of our most experienced judges and over the years has handled a wide variety of cases on all of the Family Court calendars. She is both caring and compassionate, and she genuinely wants to help the people in our community. I have observed Judge Kuriyama in court on multiple occasions and she exhibits professionalism and the appropriate demeanor we want to see in our judges.

Judge Kuriyama's confirmation as a Circuit Judge will truly benefit the Judiciary and the people of Hawaii. Please give her an opportunity to serve the community on the Circuit Court bench.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angelique N. Sanada". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Angelique N. Sanada

October 10, 2014

The Honorable Clayton Hee
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Hee,

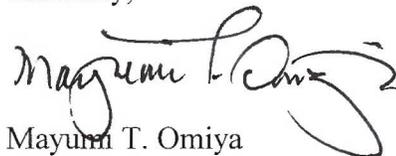
I am writing in support of Governor Neil Abercrombie's appointment of the Honorable Christine E. Kuriyama to the Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit.

I am a Circuit Court Clerk with the Family Court and have had the privilege and the pleasure to work with Judge Kuriyama at the Family Court on a professional and personal level for over 13 years. Judge Kuriyama is someone whom I totally respect and admire. I have known Judge Kuriyama to be compassionate, fair, direct and with the utmost integrity and character.

I believe Judge Kuriyama's many years of experience as a Family Court Judge will enable her to effectively and fairly serve as a Circuit Court Judge with commitment to the people and the well-being of the community and the State of Hawaii .

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for, and respectfully request your confirmation of the Honorable Christine E. Kuriyama as Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mayumi T. Omiya". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Mayumi T. Omiya

October 10, 2014

Senator Clayton Hee
Chair of the Judiciary and Labor Committee
Senate District 23
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Clayton Hee,

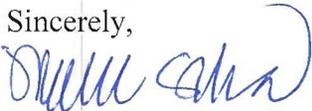
Thank you for allowing me to write a letter of support in the confirmation for the Honorable Christine E. Kuriyama, appointed Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit Court.

I have worked for the Judiciary for the past 16 years and am currently a Circuit Court Clerk at Family Court. For the past 4 years, I have clerked for Judge Kuriyama numerous times. Judge Kuriyama has always been very well prepared for her cases, very compassionate about the cases, and exemplified extreme professionalism to everyone that entered into her courtroom. Her diligent work ethic, honesty, and knowledge of the law attributes to Judge Kuriyama being one of the most experienced and compassionate judges that I have worked for.

Prior to that, I was a Court Bailiff with Family Court for 5 years. In my capacity as a Court Bailiff, I worked closely with Judge Kuriyama. She was very professional and respectful to the court staff, attorneys, pro se parties, other government agencies, incarcerated custodies and to all the people that came into her courtroom. Judge Kuriyama always ran her courtroom efficiently and orderly.

I truly support Judge Kuriyama's appointment as a Circuit Court Judge. She will be a great asset to the Judiciary and will serve the people of Hawai'i well.

Sincerely,



Michelle Silva
87-922 Kulauku St.
Waianae, HI 96792

Laureen Manabe
94-501 Hoohani Place
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797-4759

October 10, 2014

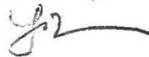
Mr. Clayton Hee
Chair of the Judiciary and Labor Committee
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Mr. Hee:

I am writing to you in support of Family Court Judge Christine Kuriyama's confirmation for Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit, State of Hawaii. Judge Kuriyama is an experienced judge who has been assigned to various Family Court calendars. She makes fair decisions, is compassionate and genuinely wants to help the people of Hawaii. Being a juvenile probation officer for the last 15 years, I have had the pleasure of working with Judge Kuriyama during her rotation while she was assigned to the juvenile calendar. Please allow Judge Kuriyama the opportunity to serve the community in the Circuit Court.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,



Laureen Manabe

October 10, 2014

The Honorable Clayton Hee
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Hee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present this letter of support and recommendation for the confirmation of the Honorable Christine E. Kuriyama, as Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit.

My name is Dawn Ching, and I am currently a Circuit Court Clerk in the Family Court of the First Circuit. I have been in Hawaii public service for 30 years to date, and the last 23 with the Judiciary, State of Hawaii. I have had the honor and pleasure of court clerking for several exceptional Circuit and District Court Judges and have also served as a Judicial Assistant in Circuit Court.

In all my years of judicial experience, I can honestly say that Judge Christine Kuriyama exemplifies the characteristics and qualities that are essential in a Circuit Court Judge. Her judicial demeanor on the bench is professional, courteous, compassionate and fair. Her knowledge of the law is very evident in her expedient and confident rulings on the bench. The most outstanding judicial characteristic of Judge Kuriyama, in my humble opinion, is her preparedness. With every case that appears before her, it is clear that she has reviewed the file, read the pleadings and is up to date with the status of the case. Because of this, those appearing before her, including counsel, are made to feel important. As a clerk, our job is made much easier and even pleasurable as Judge Kuriyama's rulings are clear, concise, and thorough. Judge Kuriyama is a woman of integrity and good moral character, and the staff here at Family Court greatly appreciate her kindness, respect and gratitude.

In closing, I thank you again for this opportunity to express my support and respectfully request your confirmation of Judge Christine E. Kuriyama as Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit.

Sincerely,


Dawn M. Ching

Lianne Lee Onishi

98-1615 Ka'ahumanu St., Aiea, HI 96701 ♦ Lianne.Lee9766@gmail.com ♦ (808) 779-5236

October 10, 2014

The Honorable Clayton Hee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 407
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Letter of Recommendation for Judge Christine E. Kuriyama

Dear Senator Hee,

I am writing to you in strong support of confirming Family Court Judge Christine E. Kuriyama as a Circuit Court Judge for the vacancies created by Judge Patrick Border and the now Justice Michael Wilson. I graduated from Punahou School - class of 2005 (with your son Ka'ohu). I am now an attorney and I have been a judicial law clerk at Family Court since December of 2012 and have worked with Judge Kuriyama on various committees and projects (i.e. Juvenile Calendar Revision Committee).

Judge Kuriyama is one of our most experienced judges at Family Court. In March 2014, she received the Outstanding Judicial Achievement Award from the Hawai'i Women Lawyers Organization. Judge Kuriyama was previously a special division judge at family court, handling restraining order cases, paternity cases, guardianship cases, adoptions, and involuntary commitment cases. Judge Kuriyama also runs one of our specialty courts, Zero to Three Court – which is a Child Protective Services court providing services for families with young children where abuse and neglect has been confirmed; helping them work towards reunification and permanence.

In 2014, Judge Kuriyama was recently was appointed as the lead judge of the Domestic Division, which handles all of our divorce proceedings – pre and post decree. Judge Kuriyama has always had a reputation for being fair in her decisions and excelling in keeping an organized flow to her calendar. Whether she is presiding over a criminal or civil case, she always treats attorneys, pro se litigants, and parties with patience and respect.

If you ask any of her fellow Family Court judges, they would tell you that Judge Kuriyama never settles for the status quo – she is always looking to improve and work on new projects to help people in our community. Since she has become lead judge of the Domestic Division, Judge Kuriyama has truly taken charge in turning the division around. By nature, she is very organized, meticulous, and driven. I have no doubt that in running her own Circuit criminal or civil division she would identify the problems or gaps and make sure that the division is running as efficiently as possible.

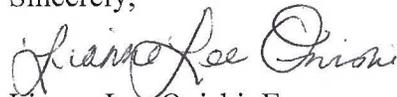
Letter of Recommendation for Judge Christine E. Kuriyama
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My husband is currently a temporary law clerk in Justice Wilson's former division (6th Division). He also believes that Judge Kuriyama would be a good choice for the division or the other vacant position. Judge Kuriyama would surely make sure all outstanding orders are completed, if any, and any backlog is addressed if she were appointed. I am confident that her managerial skills and fair judicial demeanor would make her an excellent Circuit Court judge.

Aside from her outstanding professional credentials, Judge Kuriyama is simply a good person. As a successful female judge who has managed to have a career and family, I look up to her as one of my personal mentors. Every time I see her, asks me how I am doing and greets me with a hug and a smile. Judge Kuriyama truly does the work that she does for the love of the job. She is passionate about being a judge and being able to help people – whether it be helping two drug addicted parents get clean and reclaim custody of their baby or to help two toxic divorcing parents come to a point where they can learn to co-parent their children. I have seen her work miracles in her courtroom here at Family Court and I am confident that she should be confirmed as a Circuit Court Judge.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Lianne Lee Onishi, Esq.

Dear Senator Hee,

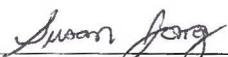
Thank you for giving us the opportunity to ask that you confirm the appointment of Judge Christine Kuriyama to the Circuit Court. We are Family Court law clerks in the Domestic Division, Special Division and the Juvenile Division and a Family Court paralegal in the Adoption Records Unit. We all have worked with Judge Kuriyama as she has been a judge in every division and in the Adoption Records Unit. We can truthfully state that while we have worked with many fine Family Court judges, she has always stood out as an exceptional judge and an equally exceptional human being.

Judge Kuriyama is at work early and stays late. When we send her documents to be signed, she reads the documents carefully and promptly returns them to us with concise instructions if further action is needed. She is organized and prepared for her cases because she thoroughly reviews files before the hearing. When we observe her in the courtroom, she is patient, calm and in control of the proceedings. Her decisions are intelligent and well thought-out, based on her extensive knowledge of rules, statutes and case law. In addition, her decisions are based on her common sense and her understanding of the complexities of human interaction. She somehow balances everyone's competing interests and reaches a fair and just result.

Judge Kuriyama is courteous and respectful to everyone-both inside and outside the courtroom. Her thoughtfulness to staff is a quality which we truly appreciate. Despite her busy schedule filled with hearings, conferences, case preparation, documents review and drafting, and all of the administrative duties done by a Domestic Division lead judge, she always takes the time to listen and to determine if there is something she can do to make our work or lives easier. Judge Kuriyama inspires us to do our best as she makes us feel that we are valued and are all contributing to the work of the Judiciary.

If you ask Judge Kuriyama why she is a judge, she will answer that it is because judges can make a difference. She truly cares about working hard and helping people. As one example, in her work with the Hawaii Zero to Three Court you can clearly see how she puts her heart and soul into making a difference in these young children's lives. We would sorely miss her, but we know that with her proven record of dedication, compassion, and skill at meeting any challenges that arise, Judge Kuriyama would make an outstanding Circuit Court judge.

Sincerely,


SUSAN JONG
LAW CLERK SINCE 1988


TARI LEE
LAW CLERK SINCE 2000


RHODA KEALOHA-SPENCER
LAW CLERK SINCE 2001


REBEKA TAKAYAMA
LAW CLERK SINCE 2007


JANICE MARTIN-PANG
PARALEGAL SINCE 1992

Susan Tamura Sato
1208 Ala Pili Loop
Honolulu, HI 96818
October 13, 201

Honorable Clayton Hee, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Christine Kuriyama, Nominee for Judge, First Circuit Court

Dear Senator Hee:

I am writing in support of Christine Kuriyama, who is a nominee for the position of Judge, First Circuit Court.

I have known Judge Kuriyama for about 30 years. We met while working at the Office of the Attorney General in the early 1980's and have remained friends since that time. After entering private practice, Judge Kuriyama represented individuals in appeals before the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review, Social Security Administration, where I was then employed. I supported her appointment as a Family Court Judge. I continue to believe, as I did then, that Judge Kuriyama has the legal knowledge and skills to be an excellent Judge. As important, however, are her integrity and steadfastness; her work ethic; her compassion toward others; and her commitment to the Judiciary. In the years that I worked with her and observed her in private practice and as a Family Court Judge, Judge Kuriyama consistently worked hard. She was always prepared, organized, and meticulous. When representing individuals at hearings before the Social Security Administration, she was not only highly competent in her representation, but always went the extra mile for her clients, who had physical and mental disabilities that made it difficult for them to navigate the appeals process. Since her appointment to the Family Court, Judge Kuriyama has continued to display these same qualities and now has many years of experience as a Judge and with the Judiciary. She is well-qualified for the position of Circuit Court Judge.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on Judge Kuriyama's nomination.

Very truly yours,



Susan Tamura Sato

October 13, 2014

Senator Clayton Hee
Chair of the Judiciary and Labor Committee
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Senator Hee,

This letter is to enthusiastically request that you confirm the appointment of the Honorable Christine E. Kuriyama to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

I have been with family court for over 10 years and I am currently assigned to the Honorable Jennifer L. Ching. I have, however, also had the opportunity, over the years, to clerk for the Honorable Christine E. Kuriyama.

The Honorable Christine E. Kuriyama is one of the top Judges that we currently have in Family Court. She is knowledgeable, fair, and even-tempered. Many people who appear in family court bring raw emotions, broken spirits and other very challenging problems. Judge Kuriyama treats people with dignity and she navigates through highly volatile situations with the expertise of a veteran jurist. I have witnessed first-hand the way she manages her court hearings and I am convinced that she is a person who can contribute to improving public perception of the entire court system. Judge Kuriyama serves the public sincerely, she brings integrity to the courtroom and she possesses a solid knowledge of the law.

Please do not neglect to confirm the Honorable Christine E. Kuriyama.

Aloha,



Frances Teves

Susan Yoo
PO Box 970805
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

October 14, 2014

Clayton Hee
Chair of the Judiciary and Labor Committee
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Hee:

This letter is in support of Family Court Judge Christine E. Kuriyama's confirmation as Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. I have had the privilege of working with Judge Kuriyama as a Child Welfare Services social worker for 9 years and 3 years as a juvenile probation officer. Judge Kuriyama is a person of great integrity. Please consider Judge Kuriyama for the position of Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Susan Yoo

Senator Clayton Hee
Chair of the Judiciary and Labor Committee
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, HI 96813

October 13, 2014

Dear Senator Hee:

This letter is in regards to the appointment of Judge Christine E. Kuriyama to the Circuit Court by Governor Neil Abercrombie. I am in support of the confirmation of this appointment due to my experiences as a DHS Social Worker and Juvenile Probation Officer with Judge Kuriyama in and out of the courtroom.

Judge Kuriyama possess the characteristics of honesty, integrity, and compassion in working with the clients that she presides over. She is also very respectful and values the input of professionals (attorneys, bailiffs, clerks, social workers, probation officers, etc.) she works with in her courtroom. For these reasons I believe Judge Kuriyama should be confirmed as a Circuit Court Judge.

Thank you for your consideration of Judge Kuriyama for this prestigious position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Guerrero', written over a horizontal line.

Joel Guerrero
Probation Officer
(808) 539-4472

FAYE T. KIMURA
JAMES LUTTE
MIKE KEOLA PIENA
SARI SANCHEZ
NICOLE ISA-IIJIMA
c/o 834 Kainoa Place
Honolulu, HI 96821

October 10, 2014

Senator Clayton Hee
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407□
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Hee:

RE: Confirmation of Judge Christine Kuriyama for the Circuit Court of the
First Circuit

Judge Christine Kuriyama has been the lead Family Court judge for the Honolulu Zero to Three Court (HZTTC) and the Oahu Child Welfare Mediation Program (OCWMP) since approximately 2009. We, the undersigned, have all staffed the HZTTC and the OCWMP, in different capacities and for different time periods, under Judge Kuriyama's leadership. We all unequivocally support her confirmation for the Circuit Court because we believe her skills and strengths are uniquely suited for that position.

As lead judge for HZTTC, Judge Kuriyama has been trained by leading experts in the field of brain development, cultural competence, the effect of bias on decision-making, techniques to engage parents and children in services and in their hearings, and the need to consider the effects of trauma on the behavior and abilities of party litigants, among many other topics pertinent to family law. As lead judge for the Oahu Child Welfare Mediation Program since its inception, alternative dispute resolution has become fundamental to her work as a jurist. She will bring this wealth of knowledge and accumulated wisdom to her work as a Circuit Court judge, if confirmed, and the outcomes she could achieve include sentences and verdicts that consider community safety and health from a holistic

perspective as well as decisions that parties view as workable and likely to endure.

Judge Kuriyama is a meticulous decision-maker and manager of tasks and people. She is efficient and decisive. Significantly, she is also a team player in her interactions with other judges and gets along well with her clerks and court staff. She has an excellent judicial demeanor and temperament.

For all these reasons, even though we will miss her personally and professionally at Family Court, we strongly support her confirmation for the Circuit Court.

Sincerely,



FAYE T. KIMURA
Co-Coordinator
Court Improvement Program



JAMES LUTTE
Program Manager
Family Drug Court



MIKE KEOLA PIENA
Case Manager
Family Drug Court



SARI SANCHEZ
Law Fellow
William S. Richardson
School of Law



NICOLE ISA-IJIMA
Law Fellow
William S. Richardson
School of Law

Renee Kuhau
777 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

October 14, 2014

Clayton Hee
Chair of the Judiciary and Labor Committee
Senate District 23
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Hee:

I am writing to support the appointment of Family Court Judge Christine Kuriyama as a Circuit Court Judge in the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

I have known and worked with Judge Kuriyama in different role capacities: as a Probation officer, Supervising Probation Officer, and committee member. In all roles, I have found her to demonstrate leadership, integrity, and intelligence. Judge Kuriyama is an experienced judge who has been assigned a wide variety of cases on the Family Court calendar. She has always demonstrated professionalism, and been fair and just in her decisions. Over the years, I have witnessed her compassion and concern for the people of Hawaii. Her dedication and commitment to improve the lives of people in the community is truly genuine.

Judge Kuriyama is a qualified candidate for the bench and will be a valuable asset to Judiciary. I encourage her selection for appointment as Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit Court.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Renee Kuhau

October 13, 2014

Dear Honorable Clayton Hee ~

I am a Court Clerk with Family Court, and have worked with Judge Kuriyama for about 1 year and 4 months. I have been able to personally witness her performance as a judge, both in and out of the courtroom. I am also currently serving on a committee in which Judge Kuriyama is the chairperson. As a result, I have no doubt that she will do an excellent job as a Circuit Court judge. She is intelligent, hard-working, fair, and has a strong sense of order, responsibility and accountability, which I believe are key qualities for a judge. I have also witnessed her concern and compassion for the families that appear before us. She is always courteous and respectful, always acknowledging parties, attorneys, and staff alike and is well respected here at Family Court. I am pleased and honored to submit this letter in support of her confirmation of appointment to Circuit Court.

Yours truly ~



Stacey S. Mamiya

Cindy Tokuhama
99-318 Aheaha Street
Aiea, Hawaii 96701

The Honorable Clayton Hee
Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Hee:

Re: Christine E. Kuriyama

I am writing this letter in support of the appointment of Christine E. Kuriyama as a Circuit Judge of the First Circuit.

I was employed by the Judiciary as a Circuit Court Clerk for 24 years. I had the privilege of working with Judge Kuriyama for approximately 12 years while she served as a Per Diem Judge and full-time Family Court Judge. Judge Kuriyama has the appropriate temperament as well as knowledge and integrity necessary to be an excellent addition to the Circuit Court Bench.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Tokuhama".

Cindy Tokuhama

October 14, 2014

Grace Nihei Kido
Direct Line: (808) 544-3893
Direct Fax: (808) 540-5032
E-mail: gkido@cades.com

Via email: senhee@capitol.hawaii.gov

Honorable Clayton Hee
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
Hawai'i State Capitol Room 407
415 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Candidacy of Christine E. Kuriyama for Circuit Court Judgeship

Dear Senator Hee:

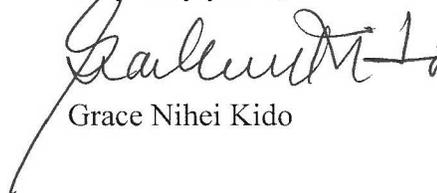
I am writing to strongly support the candidacy of District Family Court Judge Christine E. Kuriyama to serve as a Judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

Since 1985, I have been an attorney in private practice in Hawai'i, at the Cades Schutte law firm, which is the former law firm of Judge Kuriyama's husband. Since then, I have come to know her personally as a fellow attorney and as a fellow parent of sons who were classmates from preschool through highschool and teammates on various sports teams. Despite her busy schedule, first as an attorney, then as a judge, she made the time to selflessly serve in leadership capacities for various bar, school and sports activities.

During the almost 30 years that I have known Judge Kuriyama, she has always acted ethically, with integrity, humility and sense of fairness, and exhibited other fine qualities. I have the highest regard for her, as a judge and a person, who cares deeply about the law and our community.

She will make an excellent Circuit Court Judge. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Grace Nihei Kido

October 10, 2014

The Honorable Clayton Hee
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 407
415 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Hee,

Please confirm the appointment of Judge Christine Kuriyama to the Circuit Court. We are Judicial Clerks at Family Court. When we first started working at Family Court, we were impressed that Judge Kuriyama made the effort to know our names and which section we worked in. If we ran into her in the hallways or elevators, she would always talk to us and ask us how we were doing.

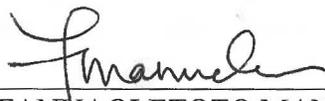
Judge Kuriyama acknowledges the work that we do and she lets us know that she appreciates us. We in turn really appreciate her thoughtful nature. She is a wonderful Family Court judge. We know that she will also be a wonderful Circuit Court judge.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



JOSIE SUZUKI



FANUAOLETOTO MANUELE

STARN • O'TOOLE • MARCUS & FISHER

A LAW CORPORATION

October 15, 2014

Senator Clayton Hee
Judiciary and Labor Committee
415 S. Beretania Street
Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

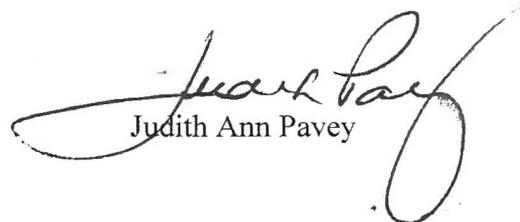
Re: Letter in support of Christine Kuriyama's Confirmation to the
First Circuit Court

Dear Senator Hee and Judiciary Committee Members:

I strongly support Christine "Tina" Kuriyama's confirmation to the Circuit Court bench. Because she has been on the Family Court bench for so many years and I rarely step foot into that arena I cannot speak about her judicial qualities as competently as those who have appeared in her courtroom. However, I have known Tina for well over 25 years in both a professional and personal capacity and can vouch for her intelligence and good character. She was always a pleasure to work with as opposing counsel before she became a judge and I do not recall a single instance where we (my former partner Cindy Inouye and I) had any concern about her honesty or integrity. To the contrary, she was completely trustworthy. Tina is kind, generous and has a good sense of humor. She has always had a good reputation as a smart, competent and ethical lawyer. I am confident that if confirmed she will be an excellent Circuit Court Judge.

Tina and I also have sons the same age who were classmates from kindergarten through high school graduation and we became "mom" friends, too. I know her son Andrew, her husband Stan, her sister-in-law Carolyn Kuriyama (who also has a son the same age as ours and I consider her a friend as well) and have met some of her other family members. Great family, good folks. Tina definitely does not need this job so I admire her willingness to serve. It is a very difficult and demanding public service position as she knows very well from her years in Family Court. I am impressed she is still committed to serving!

Aloha and thank you for considering my comments,



Judith Ann Pavey

October 13, 2014

The Honorable Clayton Hee
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Hee:

I am writing to ask for your support in confirming the appointment of Family Court Judge Christine Kuriyama to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. I have known Judge Kuriyama for 17 years since I began working for Family Court. When Judge Kuriyama served as Lead Judge for our Domestic Violence, Temporary Restraining Order Unit hearings, she was known to be intelligent, fair, and compassionate in her rulings, even in the most complicated and emotional cases.

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, you are entrusted with the power to shape both present and future policymaking in the State of Hawaii. Judge Kuriyama will be missed by all of us in Family Court, but her appointment to the Circuit Court, First Circuit bench will benefit and touch the lives of so many more in the State of Hawaii judicial system. Her legal experience, knowledge, and dedication to public service are undeniable.

For all the reasons listed above and more, please confirm Family Court Judge Christine Kuriyama's appointment to the Circuit Court, First Circuit. She is so highly deserving of this honor.

Sincerely,



Donna Jean Zane, PhD
Court Officer, Family Court
TRO Domestic Violence Unit
(808) 954-8094

Ms. Patricia Lum
1626 Mikahala Way
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

October 14, 2014

The Honorable Clayton Heen
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate District 23
State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senator Heen,

This letter is to support the confirmation of appointment of Judge Christine Kuriyama to the Circuit Court. Although I do not work directly with her, my interactions with her have always been very warm and positive. She makes you feel as if she truly cares about you. This sentiment is also echoed by her staff who will often talk about all of the kind things she does for them, including surprising them with snacks or lunch as a way of thanking them for all of their hard work.

When I started getting involved in fundraising for the Food Bank and Aloha United Way, Judge Kuriyama was always supportive and generous of our efforts. She truly represents the values of the Judiciary by the way she conducts herself both in and outside of the courtroom.

Based on her professionalism, experience, knowledge, but most of all her attitude of kindness, warmth, and empathy, may I ask that you please support the confirmation of appointment of Judge Kuriyama for the First Judicial Office in the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Lum". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Patricia Lum

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: johnrhinkle@hotmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for GM2 on Oct 20, 2014 11:00AM
Date: Thursday, October 16, 2014 3:49:26 PM

GM2

Submitted on: 10/16/2014

Testimony for on Oct 20, 2014 11:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
john hinkle	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Chairman Hee and Members of the Committee: I am submitting testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of the appointment of Judge Christine Kuriyama to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. I know Judge Kuriyama to be an honorable, fair-minded individual. I speak from first-hand knowledge. While I was an Assistant Administrator of Program Development for the Hawaii Department of Human Services, Social Services Division, Child Welfare Services Branch, Judge Kuriyama and I were appointed by then Chief Family Court Judge Frances Wong to serve on a task force charged with reviewing and revising Hawaii's Child Protective Act (HRS 587), and submitting our recommendations to the Hawaii State Legislature. Judge Kuriyama provided our task force with valuable insights and discussed how recommended changes would affect family court matters. One's character is best displayed in group situations where there is confusion and strongly held differences of opinion. During our work on the sensitive issue of revising HRS 587, Judge Kuriyama demonstrated a willingness to hear all points of view, asked excellent clarifying questions, and reminded us of the importance of this task force's work. In the end, with Judge Kuriyama's guidance and contributions, we were able to produce a revised HRS 587, which was reviewed and approved by the State Legislature. I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with Judge Kuriyama. She has shown herself to be an honest, dedicated, hard-working Judge. Judge Kuriyama will be a valuable asset to the First Circuit and I ask that the committee vote to confirm her. Thank you for considering my testimony. Sincerely, John R. Hinkle

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov