

Honolulu, Hawaii

NOV 14 2017

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 3

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature  
Third Special Session of 2017  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 3, submitting for study and consideration the appointment of:

CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT, STATE OF HAWAII

G.M. No. 3            ROWENA A. SOMERVILLE,  
                          for a term to expire in ten years,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee has reviewed the resume and statements submitted by the appointee and finds Rowena A. Somerville to possess the requisite qualifications to be considered for appointment to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

Testimony in support of the appointment of Ms. Somerville was submitted by the Hawaii State Bar Association Board of Directors, Native Hawaiian Bar Association, Hawaii Women Lawyers, and thirty-four individuals.

Ms. Somerville received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She subsequently received her Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where she sat on the admissions committee. She also served as a board member of Advocates for Public Interest Law (APIL) and was an APIL Summer Grant recipient.



Since 2014, Ms. Somerville has served as an administrative hearings officer for the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, where she has presided over one hundred special education due process hearings involving alleged violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Prior to that experience, she was a deputy attorney general from 2005 to 2014 representing the Department of Transportation and Department of Land and Natural Resources in proceedings involving issues of environmental law, contracts, employment law, Native Hawaiian rights, administrative rule-making, maritime law, and criminal law. Ms. Somerville was also a deputy prosecuting attorney for the City and County of Honolulu from 1996 to 2005. During her career she has litigated over thirty jury trials and over one hundred bench trials.

Ms. Somerville has been licensed to practice law in Hawaii since 1996, and currently serves as the vice chair of the government lawyers division of the Hawaii State Bar Association. She is also deeply involved in her community and has volunteered with numerous civic organizations including the Iolani Palace Hui from 2005 to 2006, Central Union Preschool from 2006 to 2007, and Honolulu Harbor Clean Up from 2013 to the present. Ms. Somerville has also served as a board member and nominations committee member of the Junior League of Hawaii since 1997.

Testimony in support of Ms. Somerville's appointment indicates that she is well equipped to fairly and justly consider cases that are contentious, highly emotional, and involve complicated legal and factual issues. Her decisions are well-reasoned, consistent, and the result of a careful consideration of all evidence and applicable law.

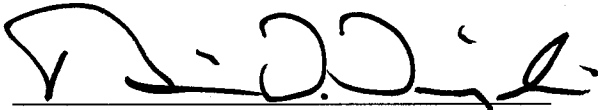
The Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) Board of Directors found the appointee to be qualified for the position of Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit, based on all categories of the HSBA's criteria that includes: integrity, diligence, legal knowledge and ability, professional experience, temperament, financial responsibility, public service, health, and ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position.

Accordingly, your Committee finds that Rowena A. Somerville has the experience, temperament, judiciousness, and other competencies to be a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit.



As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the appointee, has found the appointee to be qualified for the position to which appointed and recommends that the Senate consent to the appointment.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Judiciary,



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BRIAN T. TANIGUCHI, Chair



The Senate  
 Twenty-Ninth Legislature  
 State of Hawai'i

**Record of Votes**  
**Committee on Judiciary**  
**JDC**  
**Consent**

Gov. Msg./Jud. Com. No.:* <b>GM3</b>	Committee Referral: <b>JDC</b>	Date: <b>11/14/2017</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision				
The Recommendation is:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent 2347 <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Not Consent 2349</span>				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
TANIGUCHI, Brian T. (C)	✓			
RHOADS, Karl (VC)	✓			
GABBARD, Mike	✓			
KIM, Donna Mercado				✓
THIELEN, Laura H.	✓			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted</span>				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: <i>Karl Rhoads</i>				
<b>Distribution:</b> <span style="margin-left: 50px;">Original File with Committee Report</span> <span style="margin-left: 100px;">Yellow Clerk's Office</span> <span style="margin-left: 100px;">Pink Drafting Agency</span> <span style="margin-left: 100px;">Goldenrod Committee File Copy</span>				

\*Only one Message/Communication per Record of Votes