

From: [Alen Kaneshiro](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Testimony of Alen M. Kaneshiro in support of Judicial Nominee Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 5:33:58 PM

TESTIMONY OF
ALEN M. K. KANESHIRO, ATTORNEY AT LAW
TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
ON
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2020, 1:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 016

RE: JC 6

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION FOR JUDICIAL
NOMINEE ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

Dear Chair Karl A. Rhoads, Vice Chair Jarrett Keohokalole, and Members of Committee:

I am submitting the following testimony in support for District/Family Court Judicial Nominee Elizabeth Paek-Harris.

I have known Ms. Paek-Harris for approximately nine years. She shared an office with myself and two other colleagues for approximately three years. In those three years, I was able to work alongside Ms. Paek-Harris on a daily basis. I deeply value her as a colleague and as a friend. I have also come to know and respect Ms. Paek-Harris as a skilled attorney and as a per diem judge in the Family Court of the First Circuit.

As a practicing attorney, Ms. Paek-Harris has always been diligent and responsible in representing her clients ethically and zealously. She is always respectful to other attorneys, judges and clients. I believe that her diligence and temperament are the type of qualities that would make her an excellent judge.

In the years after I left the office where we worked together, I continued to refer clients to Ms. Paek-Harris because she was someone whom I trusted to refer my clients to, and whenever I needed a helping hand with an obscure family law question, issue or problem, she was always the first person I would call. We have always kept in touch and I was able to see her grow both personally and professionally.

Over the years, Ms. Paek-Harris and I have worked on cases together, she as a family law attorney and myself as a criminal defense attorney. Unfortunately, those two areas of law are sometimes intertwined and cross paths. We have often shared clients in situations where dual representation was necessary. These cases are difficult and delicate, both emotionally and legally. This relationship allowed me to gain insight into her intellect, hard work and her true compassion for her clients, which I am sure will carry over into her role as a judge. I have been licensed to practice law in the State of Hawaii for 15 years, appearing before the District Courts, Family Courts, and Circuit Courts in every Circuit in the State of Hawaii as well as the Intermediate Court of Appeals and the Hawaii Supreme Court. If there is one thing that I have learned is that intellect, compassion and temperament are qualities that make a great judge. Ms. Paek-Harris possesses these qualities. She possesses the integrity to make the right decisions and if I were to ever appear in court in front of her, I have no reservations

that she would disclose our past professional relationship and rule against me if the occasion called for it.

I have no reservations in saying that Ms. Paek-Harris is imminently qualified to serve as District/Family Court judge. She possesses a blend of diligence, compassion and intelligence that make a respected jurist.

I respectfully urge your support for confirmation of Judicial Nominee Elizabeth Paek-Harris.

Sincerely,

/s/ Alen M. Kaneshiro
Alen M. Kaneshiro
Attorney at Law

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: alethea@mitsuyamaandrebman.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for JC6 on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM (Written Only)*
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 2:38:44 PM

JC6

Submitted on: 9/28/2020

Testimony for on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying Remotely
Alethea Rebman	Individual	Support	No

Your comments:

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From: [Allyson Kumik](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Letter for Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:04:48 AM

To: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, 1 pm, Conference Room 016

This letter is written in support of nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris.

Elizabeth is my best friend of over 30 years. Besides her mom, I probably know her better than anyone. I am so grateful and proud to write this letter on her behalf.

As a child music prodigy and little genius with a high IQ, Elizabeth played piano in the Honolulu Symphony at ages 7 and 9. My mother and I have fond memories of her playing Mozart at our house.

Growing up, Elizabeth was always the leader, and the responsible one. She was popular, and had many friends.

As teenagers, my father, Dan Ukishima, asked Elizabeth about her future plans. She explained in detail that she wanted to go to state college in Washington, her reasons, how she was going to pay for it, and that she wanted to major in pre-law. He was very impressed, and knew she would go far in life. He wanted to help her but he died too soon.

Elizabeth had a humble background. She is a first generation Korean-American. Her parents had a store in International Market Place. She lived in an apartment. She went to public school. She went to an affordable college.

Still, Elizabeth excelled at everything she did, and she did it all on her own.

During law school, she made Law Review, and was an animals rights advocate.

As an Associate, she kept winning her motions. She is a great writer, logical, with strong intuition.

She built a successful law practice for 10 years, and practiced law for 14 years. As her legal support, I saw her hard work and dedication firsthand. She is organized, level-headed, and a good communicator. She has good character, honest, ethical, and has integrity. She is a planner and thinks ahead. She is compassionate, and always willing to help. Her clients and colleagues loved her.

She helped draft Family Court policies, and served as Mediator.

She received numerous awards and recognitions, including pro bono awards.

Outside of work, Elizabeth is an amazing mother, wife, and friend. She and her husband Doug make a great team. Their daughter Nani is also smart, strong, and talented. As a friend, Elizabeth is funny, thoughtful, supportive, genuine, down-to-earth, and humble. She always knows what to do or say in a way that matters.

Elizabeth is a breast cancer survivor. When she was first diagnosed, she cried to me once, and then immediately went to work. She did all her research, read books, talked to people with cancer, found the best doctors, talked to my husband about nutrition, changed her diet and lifestyle, wrote in her gratitude journal, and did whatever necessary to survive.

She figured out how to balance her life better and maintain her health. She became a judge, goes to her doctors appointments, attends my yoga classes, gets regular massages, takes the stairs, keeps a positive mindset, and she is learning to play cello. Her health is doing great!

Elizabeth could have chosen to do anything in her life and be exceptional at it.

As the Per Diem Family Court Judge, she tells me that she loves it. I am confident that she is perfect for the job, and know that the Judiciary would be very pleased (and lucky) to have her as part of their family too.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Respectfully,

Allyson Kumik

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August 20, 2020

VIA U.S. MAIL <chiefjustice@courts.hawaii.gov>

Chief Justice Mark E. Recktenwald

Supreme Court of Hawaii

417 South King Street

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**Re: Letter in Support of Elizabeth Paek-Harris for Judgeship at Family Court
Family Court, First Circuit, State of Hawaii**

Dear Chief Justice:

I write in support of my colleague and friend, Elizabeth Paek-Harris, to be appointed as a full-time judge to the Family Court of the First Circuit.

I have known Elizabeth since our student days at William S. Richardson School of Law. As a general practitioner, who handles some family court cases, I have consulted Elizabeth over the years whenever I had a question or issue about one of my divorce cases. Elizabeth or “Libby” as her friends sometimes refer to her, has always been generous with her time and has been a valuable resource in my own practice.

I cannot think of anyone more qualified than Elizabeth to be appointed to the family court bench for the following reasons:

First, Elizabeth is extremely knowledgeable about family law and is always up to date about the latest appellate decisions and amendments to the applicable rules. In part, this is because, Elizabeth has volunteered for years to update the Hawai’i Divorce Manual as a member of the HSBA’s Family Law Section. In the past, whenever I had a question about some aspect of family law, I could always call Elizabeth to find out the answer or to point me in the right direction.

Second, Elizabeth embodies the spirit of community service, which our alma mater (i.e., WSRSL), instilled in us. Over the years, Elizabeth has selflessly committed countless hours to providing pro bono legal services, which she has been formally recognized for. Elizabeth is also a passionate advocate for animals and has been involved in the local community to help build dog parks and to protect the rights of abused animals. In the area of family law, I believe empathy and compassion for litigants is an essential attribute, only second to substantive knowledge of the law and the court rules.

Third, Elizabeth has an extremely wide variety of experience as a family law practitioner. In addition to having her own solo practice for many years, Elizabeth worked under William Darrah, Esq., who is one of, if not, the most highly regarded family law practitioner in our State, as well as the author of the Hawaii Divorce Manual. Elizabeth has also served as a per diem judge on the family court bench for the past few years. Elizabeth was also law clerk to the Hon. Steve Alm following law school. While I assume you have her CV in your file, I wanted to emphasize the fact that this diverse experience, ranging from working for a divorce attorney specializing in multi-millionaire divorces to handling pro bono divorce cases for indigent clients, gives Elizabeth a broad set of experiences and skills necessary to be a competent arbiter in family law cases.

Fourth, Elizabeth has a stellar reputation in the legal community in her role as a per diem judge. Unfortunately, I have never been before Judge Paek-Harris because she recuses herself on my cases due to our personal friendship. However, I often hear other family court attorneys and their clients praise her fairness in making decisions in their cases. I also have heard family law attorneys lament the fact that they were not able to get Judge Paek-Harris assigned to their case.

Finally, Elizabeth did not have an easy upbringing and overcame many personal challenges to achieve what she has in her career. In high school, Elizabeth essentially raised her younger sister while her mother worked full-time and helped out her family financially. I am a firm believer in the mantra that “what does not kill you makes you stronger.” While I will not go into any more personal details, I believe the obstacles Elizabeth had to overcome to become an attorney has served her well and molded her character for the better.

In conclusion, with many experienced family law judges having recently retired from the bench, Elizabeth would not just be a valuable addition, but a necessary asset to our judiciary.

Sincerely Yours,

Andrew Stewart

Andrew Daisuke Stewart, Esq.

September 24, 2020

To: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, 1 pm, Conference Room 016

My name is Anna Lee, and it is with great pleasure that I submit this written testimony in support of Elizabeth Paek Harris's nomination for District Family Court Judge in the First Circuit.

I had the privilege of working with Elizabeth as a legal assistant for her solo family law practice from March 2016 to September 2018. In that time, I worked closely with her on a wide range of cases and oversaw many of the practice's administrative and client-facing operations as her sole employee. Today, I feel fortunate to call her both a (former) colleague and friend.

Let me first say that there is something truly special about Elizabeth. She is easily one of the most kind, honest, respectful, and intelligent people I've had the pleasure of working with. Many of her clients felt the same way. Perhaps they appreciated, as I do, her willingness to be generous with her time and attention—to listen deeply in order to truly respond thoughtfully.

Perhaps they also recognized Elizabeth's remarkable ability to really confront and work within the inevitable gray areas of family law and advance the difficult decisions necessary for resolution. And regardless of how fraught the situation, Elizabeth somehow always found a way to help people not just recover from a difficult experience but also reclaim a part of themselves many considered lost to the events leading up to divorce/paternity litigation. It takes a combination of strength and empathy that is indeed rare.

Underlying much of Elizabeth's professional accomplishments, I believe, is her genuine and personal interest in people. Her willingness to stay curious, patient, never judgmental, and to give people—all people—the benefit of the doubt is what really makes her an extraordinary judicial candidate. This compassion and understanding shine within Elizabeth in a professional capacity and certainly in a personal one. It's a big part of who she is, and just one of the many reasons I could not think of a candidate more qualified for the position of District Family Court Judge.

Thank you for your time.

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: aphirakb@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for JC6 on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM (Written Only)
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:34:11 PM

JC6

Submitted on: 9/30/2020

Testimony for on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying Remotely
Aphirak Bamrungruan	Individual	Support	No

Your comments: My name is Aphirak Bamrungruan and I am a staff attorney at Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity in strong support of Elizabeth Paek-Harris's nomination to the District Family Court of the First Circuit. I have known Ms. Paek-Harris for many years at Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii where she has dedicated her time and expertise to assist those in need of legal assistance at our neighborhood legal clinics. Based on my first-hand observations, Ms. Paek-Harris has always exhibited professionalism, due care, and civility when dealing with others. It has been my experience that Ms. Paek-Harris is always prepared, polite, courteous, and patient with clients and staff at Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii. Her positive attitude and current experience as a per diem judge at the Family Court, First Circuit will be an asset to the judiciary branch and the people of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to support Mr. Park's nomination.

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From: [Clayton Kamida](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6 : Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris for District Court
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 8:20:42 PM

To: [Senator Karl Rhodes](#)
[Senate Committee on the Judiciary](#)

Re: [Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris for Hawaii District Court Judgeship](#)

Dear Senator Rhodes:

My name is Clayton Kamida, and I am the President & CEO of the Hawaii Employers Council, a non-profit membership organization. However, I am writing in a private and personal capacity to support the nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris for a judgeship in the District Court. I have known Elizabeth for 17 years, since she was in her final year at UH law school.

When I met Elizabeth through my wife, I had already been practicing law for 12 years. When I found out she intended to practice in the area of family law upon graduation from law school, I tried to suggest to her that family law may not be her best choice – the hourly rates are low, clients are highly emotional and needy, and often the outcomes seem unsatisfactory to both sides.

However, it was clear to me that Elizabeth had entered the legal profession out of a strong desire to help people, and was truly interested in helping individuals through the difficult process of divorce.

I have known Elizabeth to be extremely intelligent, hard-working, trustworthy, and honest to a fault. She is a compassionate and zealous advocate for her clients, and has a comprehensive knowledge of family law. She also has the perfect judicial temperament—clear headed, even-keeled, and willing to look at all sides of an issue. I strongly urge you and your Committee to confirm her nomination for a District Court judgeship.

Aloha,

Clayton A. Kamida
959 Kailiu Pl.
Honolulu, HI 96825
Email: Claykam@yahoo.com

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: crystalglendonlaw@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for JC6 on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM (Written Only)*
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:48:47 AM

JC6

Submitted on: 9/30/2020

Testimony for on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying Remotely
Crystal Glendon	Individual	Support	No

Your comments:

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From: [Dale Lee](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Testimony in Support of Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 2:49:26 PM

TO: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
RE: JC6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF
ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS
Hearing: Thursday, October 1, 2020 1:00pm, Conference room 016

I am pleased to recommend District Family Court Candidate ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS. Elizabeth is blessed with uncommon “people skills” and a noteworthy Emotional Quotient (EQ) that allows her to garner confidence and respect from those who interact with her. In a quiet, no fanfare way she exudes ability, capacity and stability, founded upon an underlying strength of purpose and moral compass. My association with Elizabeth extends perhaps 13-14 years. She was an acquaintance of my late father who spoke frequently, fondly and with admiration for her. Surely influenced by his assessment, through all of my occasions to interact with her and observe her from afar, I became a fan too. When I served as Director of Professional Development and Advisor/Counselor to Law Students at the William S. Richardson School of Law, I thought it important that our law students be introduced to Elizabeth’s views on professionalism, commitment/responsibility, and the joys (and lows) of the law practice. When she spoke to the Entering Class her demeanor, poise and presence were welcoming, inspiring and authentic. She’s been similarly consistent in her years in private practice and on the Bench as a Per Diem Family Court Judge. Elizabeth is a fine, worthy Candidate.

Dale W. Lee, Esq.

Past President, Hawaii State Bar Association
HSBA #1468



Dale W. Lee, Esq.

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From: [Dawn M. Ching](#)
To: [JDC Testimony](#)
Subject: District Judge Nominee Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 10:21:51 AM

Dear Senate Committee,

I would like to take a few moments to express my support for Judicial Nominee Elizabeth-Paek Harris as District Court Judge.

I have served as a Circuit Court Clerk in both Family and Circuit Court for over 30 years. I have worked with Judge Paek-Harris since she was first appointed in Family Court as a per diem judge in February of 2019. Judge Paek-Harris has a great heart for service, and her compassion and desire to assist those families that appear before her with some type of fair and equitable resolution has been evident from the beginning of her term. Judge-Paek Harris continues to learn, grow, and adapt with an open mind and open heart as she continues to strive to always do and be better in her role as Family Court Judge. Judge Paek-Harris is knowledgeable and always well-prepared when she sits.

I believe Judge Paek-Harris will be a wonderful asset to the Family Court (or District Court) as a full-time Judge and fully support her appointment.

Sincerely,

Dawn Ching

Dawn M. Ching
Circuit Court Clerk, Family Court
(808)954-8051

DEREK R. KOBAYASHI

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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

TELEPHONE (808) 523-6060 · FAX (808) 523-6030
EMAIL: dkobayashi@schlackito.com

September 29, 2020

Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: JC 6, TESTIMONY *IN SUPPORT* OF
NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS
Hearing: October 1, 2020, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 016

The Honorable Chair Karl Rhoads and Honorable Committee Members:

I am writing to express my *strong support* for the nomination of Ms. Elizabeth Paek-Harris to the position of District Court Judge, Family Court of the First Circuit.

As I recall, I first met and came to know Ms. Paek-Harris over 15 years ago, just after she graduated from the William S. Richardson School of Law (“WSRSL”) and was embarking on her legal practice and we have remained in contact ever since. Throughout her legal career, Ms. Paek-Harris has been dedicated to the delivery of high-quality legal services, including the consistent delivery of *pro bono* legal services in the area of family law to those in our community who are not able to afford such legal services.

Ms. Paek-Harris has capably served as a *per diem* District Court Judge and this experience will serve her well as she takes the bench, full-time. She is of utmost integrity; works hard and is diligent; and is very knowledgeable about family law. I have always known her to be fair, kind and considerate of other’s views and opinions, all of which support her favorable judicial temperament. Ms. Paek-Harris is, by all appearances, in good health and financially responsible.

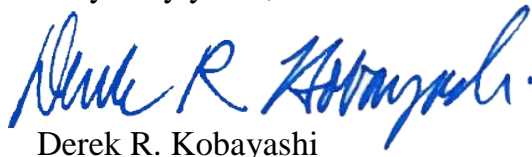
I wish to emphasize that Ms. Paek-Harris has a had a passionate commitment towards the provision of legal service to the people of the State of Hawai‘i and provide some examples of her service. In 2009, Ms. Paek-Harris was selected to participate in the Hawai‘i State Bar Association (“HSBA”) – Leadership Institute program. In 2011, she was a panelist at the annual Access to Justice Commission conference and presented a workshop on access to justice and the Family Court. In 2012, she volunteered as a judge

for the Susan B. McKay law student oral argument competition at WSRSL. For many years, Ms. Paek-Harris served as a member of the HSBA – Delivery of Legal Services to the Public Committee.

Perhaps most noteworthy, in September 2012, Ms. Paek-Harris was an integral member of a committee comprised of attorneys from the HSBA – Family Law Section, which established the Kapolei Access to Justice Room (KAJR). Since then, she has continued to regularly serve as a volunteer attorney at the KAJR, providing discrete *pro bono* legal advice to self-represented litigants in civil cases in Family Court.

In summary, without doubt, Ms. Paek-Harris meets the criteria for and possesses the ability to fulfill all of the responsibilities and duties of the position to which she has been nominated - District Court Judge, Family Court of the First Circuit. I urge your Committee on Judiciary to recommend that the Senate advice and consent be given in support of her nomination. Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Derek R. Kobayashi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Derek" and last name "Kobayashi" clearly legible. A period follows the last name.

Derek R. Kobayashi

From: [Betty Kamida](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6 Testimony in Support of Nomination of ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS
Date: Friday, September 25, 2020 7:43:02 AM

To: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS
HEARING: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, 1 pm, Conference Room 016

This character reference letter is in support of the judicial nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris. I first met her 17 years ago, shortly after she graduated from The William S. Richardson School of Law (2003). She had earned her degree while working as a legal assistant at the Law Office of Steven Guttman, where a mutual friend also worked. That friend introduced Elizabeth to me at a party, and we've been fast friends ever since.

We discovered we shared a passion for rescue dogs and always had a lot to talk about. During that time, I was working as a legal assistant for attorney Kitty K. Kamaka, but I was very involved with the Moanalua Gardens Community Association in trying to open the first City and County-sponsored off-leash dog park on Oahu. As I talked about the project with her, Elizabeth suggested we create a website; and despite her busy schedule and professional responsibilities, she shared her knowledge and resources and made it happen. Not only that, she also enlisted and organized her law school friends to volunteer at Moanalua Dog Park's Grand Opening in 2004.

Elizabeth has always been comfortable and adept with technology, as well as having amazing people skills. Her foresight, energy, creativity and generosity enabled the dog park to have a website, which was a critical communication tool in the park's early years. And her selfless desire to help others extends beyond humans to dogs in need. She generously supports local rescue organizations, financially and through adoption.

One of the hardest working, most intelligent people I've ever met, Elizabeth is also one of the kindest and most compassionate. She is always incisive and objective, and not afraid to share her analysis of a situation -- even when you don't necessarily want to hear the truth! Few people are as wise, balanced, and well-rounded as Elizabeth.

I have learned a lot about Elizabeth's character over the years, and it is clear that she has the perfect judicial temperament. Always fair, always seeking truth and clarity, supremely organized, extremely reliable, and always graceful under pressure, Elizabeth Paek-Harris has the intelligence and exceptional strength of character necessary to be a judge in the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

Respectfully yours,

Elizabeth Kamida

Honolulu, Hawaii

September 25, 2020

From: [Elsa McGehee](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6, Testimony in Support of Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 7:45:02 AM

To: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, 1 pm, Conference Room 016

Aloha Senator Rhoads and the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Elsa McGehee and I have practiced law in the State of Hawaii for approximately 22 years. I have practiced Family Law in the State of Hawaii for approximately 13 years. I am a partner at Hartley & McGehee, LLP, specializing in the area of Family Law.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Elizabeth Paek-Harris for the past 13 years. I consider Ms. Paek-Harris as an esteemed Family Law colleague and have had her as an opposing counsel in several of my cases over the years. As an opposing counsel and as an attorney practicing Family Law in Hawaii, Ms. Paek-Harris exhibits only the highest level of professionalism, ethics, and genuine care for the family and children at issue in her cases. I have been able to settle several of my cases with Ms. Paek-Harris because of her openness to reaching amicable resolutions and her willingness to negotiate in the best interests of the parties and their children. As an advocate in trial, she is an intelligent, diligent, passionate and firm advocate of her clients, while all the while maintaining the highest level of professionalism.

From what I have observed of Ms. Paek-Harris as a per diem judge in the Family Court of the First Circuit, she is always prepared, compassionate, and she intelligently and fairly assesses the cases before her. She is very understanding to the situation of the parties before her, yet firm and clear in educating them or helping them understand possible options that are in their best interests and in the best interests of their children. Ms. Paek-Harris possesses the perfect combination of genuine compassion for families and the necessary knowledge of Family Law issues that are litigated before her. This powerful and impactful combination of qualities will enable Ms. Paek-Harris to help many families survive some of the most challenging times in their lives, especially the children who are at the heart of many contentious matters.

I am proud to voice my unequivocal support of Ms. Paek-Harris in becoming a Judge of the Family Court of the First Circuit of the State of Hawaii. She will be a strong, positive, and necessary asset to the Hawaii Family Court bench for many more years to come.

Sincerely,
Elsa F. M. McGehee

September 29, 2020

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: Testimony in Support of Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Hearing: October 1, 2030 at 1:00 p.m., Conf. Room 016

Dear Senator Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

I respectfully submit this written testimony in strong support of the appointment of Elizabeth Paek-Harris, Esq. as a District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

My name is Erin M. Kobayashi and I am an attorney at Kleintop & Luria, LLP. I practice almost exclusively in Family Court here on Oahu, and at times, on the neighbor islands.

I have known Elizabeth both professionally and personally for over ten (10) years. As a William S. Richardson School of Law (WSRSL) student interested in the area of family law, my then professor encouraged me to reach out to Elizabeth, who herself was a former WSRSL graduate and regular volunteer. Since that time, Elizabeth has been a generous mentor and trusted friend.

During law school, I worked briefly for Elizabeth to learn more about the area of family law and what it was like to run a solo practice. She was, and still is, extremely organized and efficient. I have never known Elizabeth to be anything but thorough, thoughtful, and diligent in everything that she does.

As opposing counsel, she advocated strongly for her clients, but within the bounds of the law and the facts of the case. She has always conducted herself with the utmost of integrity. She genuinely cared for her clients and was ever mindful of the devastating impact that litigation can have on families, particularly children.

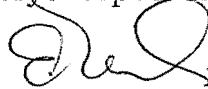
Elizabeth is well versed in complex family law matters involving complicated property division and custody issues. She is extremely smart, hard-working, and sensible in how she approaches each case. She also has a very calm, even-keeled demeanor, which I am sure has served her well as a per diem judge. She has already distinguished herself as a very capable, competent judge in our community, and I know that she will continue to do so if she is appointed.

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
September 29, 2020
Page 2 of 2

Elizabeth will listen carefully to the merits of each case and deliberate thoughtfully knowing the gravity of her decisions. She is dedicated to making the "right calls", however difficult those decisions may be. Elizabeth will be sensitive to the needs of those that come before her, while exemplifying the dignity and respect of the judiciary.

I cannot think of a better appointment to the District Family Court bench than Elizabeth Paek-Harris. She is a person of high moral values and is truly a credit to our profession and our community.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin M. Kobayashi', with a stylized, flowing script.

ERIN M. KOBAYASHI



SanHi

GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW PARTNERSHIP

DATE: 9-25-2020

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads
Chair, Committee on Judiciary
Submitted Via Capitol Website

FROM: Gary Slovin
Partner,
SanHi Government Strategies

RE: **JC-6- Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Family Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS, for a term to expire in 6 years.**

Dear Chair Rhoads and members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I write in very strong support of the application of Elizabeth Paek-Harris to be a Family Court Judge. I believe, from my personal experience as a client of hers, that she would be an exceptional family court judge. I believe she would work toward solutions in positive and dignified ways that would promote parties in family disputes being able to move forward in a dignified and whole way with their lives. I know this is how you approach community issues. We are at a time when this kind of attitude on the part of our leaders, certainly including judges, is particularly important. It is a time, regrettably, of discord, and a time when families are stressed in unprecedented ways. Elizabeth is a lawyer who does not need her ego to be stroked. She does feel a need to find solutions people can feel good about and by which they can feel respected. She is a solver of problems, not a creator of them. She is calm, deliberative, and creative.

As my wife and I were contemplating divorce, the lawyers I considered recommended a litigious approach, a way of moving forward that I strongly disfavored. A friend finally recommended Elizabeth as a family practitioner who took a different, more creative, less litigious approach. She was right. Elizabeth found a way to help us help ourselves reach a solution that would work for us, even if unconventional. She suggested a way of moving forward that would leave our relationship intact. This meant a dramatically lower fee for Elizabeth, but a wonderful resolution for my wife and me. The size of her fee just didn't seem to matter. True, this is just one case. Yet I feel it reveals the kind of judge Elizabeth would be. I think a person of Elizabeth's temperament, philosophy and integrity would make her an asset to the Family Court. I heartily recommend her.

Respectfully,
Gary Slovin

DOI / LUKE

Attorneys At Law, A Limited Liability Law Company

GAVIN K. DOI
KENDAL A. LUKE
GRACE U. LEE
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September 29, 2020

Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Via email only, no hard copy to follow:
JDCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

**RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF
ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS**

Hearing: Thursday, October 1, 2020, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 016

Dear Senator Rhoads & Members of the Senate Committee:

My name is Gavin Doi, and I am a family law attorney and member in good standing with the Hawaii State Bar Association. I am writing in support of Elizabeth Paek-Harris, a nominee for the District Family Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

I have known Judge Paek-Harris for well over a decade, first as a fellow practitioner and colleague, and later appearing before her in her role as a Per Diem Family Court Judge in Kapolei. In both roles, she has been more than capable, responsible, ethical, and very importantly compassionate, both about the law and the people that the law serves.

The nature of family law requires compassion and understanding, as it deals with people at some of the most difficult times in their lives. Sadly, this is not always the case with practitioners and judges. Judge Paek-Harris has consistently understood the serious nature of these issues. As a practitioner, when she was Liz Paek (no "Judge," and not yet "Harris"), I knew her to be a diligent attorney, first as an associate at another office, then opening her own practice as a solo office. She always displayed a sharp understanding of the law, but also showing patience and understanding in dealing with individuals.

I was very excited for Judge Paek-Harris when she was appointed as a Per Diem Judge, as I knew she would bring not only knowledge of family law, but welcomed *energy and effort* to the position. Since then, she has displayed excellent judicial characteristics while sitting in Kapolei. She has a firm grasp of the legal issues placed before her. Perhaps of equal importance, I believe that the public's perception of judicial fairness is of significant importance, and Judge Paek-Harris has exhibited that quality.

Senator Karl A. Rhoads & Senate Committee on Judiciary
September 29, 2020
Page 2

Judge Paek-Harris, based on the above, will make a fine sitting Judge, and I endorse and support her without qualification. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. K. Doi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "G." and last name "Doi" clearly distinguishable.

Gavin K. Doi



September 25, 2020

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Submitted via Capitol website

RE: SUPPORT FOR NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS TO THE DISTRICT FAMILY COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

Hawaii Women Lawyers (HWL) is a nonprofit organization with approximately 300 members/attorneys. HWL's mission includes improving the status of women in the legal profession, increasing the number of women attorneys in positions of authority and responsibility, and promoting the advancement of all women.

HWL believes that increasing opportunities for, and improving the visibility of, qualified women in the Judiciary is extremely important. The judicial bench should be adequately balanced and reflect the composition of Hawaii's citizen.

The percentage of women judges in Hawaii has never been truly representative of the community at large. HWL has been working with the Bar, the Judicial Selection Commission and the appointing authorities (Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald and Governor David Ige) to educate and encourage women attorneys to consider applying for judicial positions. Significant strides have been made in the past several years, but HWL believes that more can be done to appoint qualified women to fill judicial vacancies to bring balance to the bench.

Consistent with these efforts to improve the diversity of our bench, HWL **supports** the nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris for the District Family Court, and respectfully requests that you appoint her to the First Circuit. Elizabeth Paek-Harris's appointment will help to ensure that the number of women judges on the bench better represents the number of women in the legal profession and the community at large.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit support on this nomination.

Very truly yours,

Hawaii Women Lawyers

Hawaii Women Lawyers
P.O. Box 2072
Honolulu, Hawaii 96805
Email: hawaiiwomenlawyers@gmail.com

From: [Huilin Dong](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Elizabeth Paek Harris
Date: Saturday, September 26, 2020 4:58:58 PM

I am submitting this in support of appointment of Elizabeth Paek Harris as a family court judge. Since she had been sitting as a per firm judge, I have appeared before her a number of times and have been really impressed with her pragmatic problem solving skills and efficiency in court management. She serves with humility, integrity and competence. She is a great judge.

Huilin Dong#6845

--

Huilin Dong, Attorney at Law
810 Richards Street, Suite 633
Honolulu, HI 96813
Tel: 808 5285650

From: [Jennifer Shimabuku](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH PAK-HARRIS
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:58:35 AM

To: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION
OF ELIZABETH PAK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, 1 pm, Conference Room 016

TESTIFIER: Jennifer Shimabuku

Chair Rhoads:

I strongly support the nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris.

I was able to work as a legal extern to Ms. Paek-Harris when she was practicing as a family law attorney. Ms. Paek-Harris always counseled her clients with confidence, compassion and a strong understanding of the law. She was also involved in many committees and workgroups such as being a volunteer mediator and serving in different leadership positions of the Family Law Section of the HSBA. She has most recently served as a First Circuit per diem judge. She has committed herself to helping others in her community and has mentored young lawyers to do the same.

I have since looked up to Ms. Paek-Harris as a strong role model and believe she has the professional and personal qualities to make her especially qualified to serve on the bench.

Thank you.

From: [Jim Hoenig](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS
Date: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 2:27:22 PM

To: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

From James K. Hoenig, J.D., PhD (Psych)

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION
OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, 1 pm, Conference Room 016

I write to support the appointment of Elizabeth Paek-Harris to serve as a full-time Family Court Judge.

As an attorney, psychologist, and full-time Family Law mediator (for the last 25 years), I am very familiar with what it takes to be a successful Family Law attorney and Family Court judge.

I have known Elizabeth since 2004. I have mediated cases in which she represented a party and have served on various committees with her, including helping with some of the outstanding volunteer work she did for the Judiciary under Hon. Frances Wong's direction.

I know that Elizabeth has a solid and supportive family life, a great diversity of interests and knowledge, and an excellent understanding of both the law and the emotional content of Family Law proceedings.

Elizabeth is diligent, fully committed, flexible, smart, sensitive to the needs of others, and judicious in her temperament and demeanor. Her service as a *per diem* judge receives rave reviews from every attorney I talk to – for her thorough preparation, her listening with respect, and her fair decisions.

I am happy and enthusiastic about writing to you in support of the appointment of Elizabeth as a full-time Family Court judge. I am

confident she will meet the high standards that your committee sets for the Judiciary, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

Jim Hoenig, J.D., PhD (Psych).

Dispute Prevention & Resolution
1003 Bishop Street Suite 1155
Honolulu Hawaii 96813
808-523-1234 Fax: 808-275-3354

"I'm trying to be the person my dog thinks I am"

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<<

From: [Joan Ukishima](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6: Testimony In support of Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:33:50 AM

To: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair State Judiciary Committee

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION
OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, 1 pm, Conference Room 016

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for the nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris for Family Court judge.

My name is Joan Ukishima and I have known "Liz" since she was in the 8th grade and was best friends with my daughter Allyson. Liz visited often and my late husband Dan and I were so impressed with her respectful manners, maturity and intelligence.

Over the years, I have watched Liz become an exceptionally generous, kind and diligent adult.

My daughter is so fortunate to have Liz as a friend, always ready to lend a willing ear and provide wise counsel. She is also a most fun-loving caretaker of their two young daughters.

Liz has all the qualities a good Family Court judge should have to apply the law while affirming and guiding families through what can be an anguished process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,
Joan Ukishima

The Law Offices of
JOHN W. SCHMIDTKE, JR.
Attorney at Law • A Law Corporation

September 22, 2020

Senator Karl A. Rhoads
Chair Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Testimony In Support of Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris (JC 6)

Dear Senator Rhoads and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

Ms. Elizabeth Paek-Harris should be immediately approved as a family court judge. I have known her since 2003 when she was sworn in as an attorney. I first developed a respect for her as a lawyer and a person when we had cases against each other—she was a skilled and worthy attorney who forced me to be at my best at all times. She excelled in court, and she wrote just as well. Later, we began working together as co-counsel on cases, and my appreciation of her abilities increased. Working with her made me a better attorney.

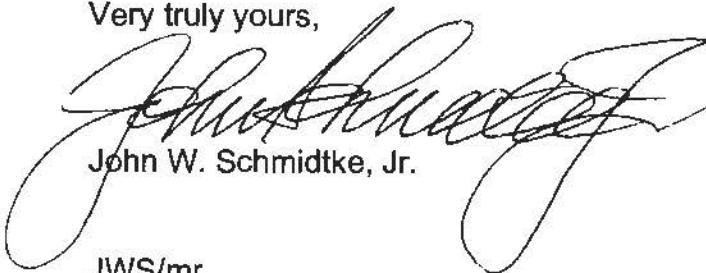
Ms. Paek-Harris is smart and knowledgeable. She has incredible experience; there would be no "learning curve" for her when she enters the courtroom and the people of Hawai'i deserve family court judges who can immediately help them through their distress. She has great compassion. Litigants who appear before her will know they have been heard by a wise person who cares deeply about rendering a just and equitable decision.

Ms. Paek Harris has the respect of the family law bar. She served as the chair of the Family Law Section of the Bar, organizing monthly continuing legal education presentations that raised the level of service to the public for everyone. Without her hard work and her creativity, the Hawai'i Child Support Guidelines would not be in the thoughtfully-designed and easy-to-use format that the judiciary, the Office of Child Support Hearings, the Child Support Enforcement Agency, the family law practitioners, and the public use every day.

Please confirm her immediately.

If you have any questions, please call.

Very truly yours,



John W. Schmidtke, Jr.

JWS/mr

September 29, 2020

To: Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Liann Ebesugawa

RE: STRONG SUPPORT OF JC 6 District Family Court of the First Circuit,
Judicial Nominee, ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

Hearing: Thursday, October 1, 2020, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 016

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee:

I write this letter in strong support of Elizabeth Paek-Harris's nomination to the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

I have known Elizabeth for twenty (20) years as we were law school classmates at William S. Richardson School of Law. For as long as I have known Elizabeth, she has been an exemplar of compassion, integrity and excellence.

I have always been impressed with Elizabeth's ability to tremendously care with a steady effective intellect. Elizabeth focused her career path on family law and dedicated herself to being the best advocate for her clients. Prior to her per diem judicial appointment Elizabeth had a successful legal practice, which she closed because of her dedication to judicial service. Over the years, I have referred many people to Elizabeth and all of them have had excellent reviews regarding her level of service. It is a special lawyer that can help people through the toughest times of their lives and bring them through that process whole, healthy and ready for the next chapter. She is the type of person who is best suited to adjudicate these, oftentimes, very difficult cases. I have always known her to be fair, strong and compassionate.

I urge your appointment of Elizabeth Paek-Harris's nomination. It is individuals like Elizabeth who will serve the bench well with the integrity, fairness and appropriate judicial temperament that our legal system requires.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in strong support.

Liann Ebesugawa

From: [Lynne Toyofuku](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Chief Justice's Appointment of Elizabeth Paek-Harris to the District Family Court of the First Circuit; Order No. 2020-6
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 3:13:38 PM

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Dela Cruz, and members on the Committee on Judiciary,

I write in support of the confirmation of Elizabeth Paek-Harris as the position of District Family Court Judge, First Circuit.

As a recently appointed per diem judge assigned to the sit on the Domestic Calendar in Family Court, I have observed Judge Paek-Harris conducting settlement conferences and hearings on motions for pre-decree and post-decree relief. She displays a good grasp of the issues before her, a sound knowledge of law and procedure, as well as compassion, objectivity, respect for the litigants and counsel. I am very confident she will continue to contribute significantly to as a District Judge in Family Court. I therefore strongly urge you to confirm her appointment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very best regards,

Lynne

Lynne T. T. Toyofuku, Esq.

Marr Jones & Wang

A Limited Liability Partnership

Pauahi Tower

1003 Bishop Street, Suite 1500

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: [\(808\) 536-4900](tel:(808)536-4900)

Facsimile: [\(808\) 536-6700](tel:(808)536-6700)

Email: LToyofuku@marrjones.com

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Lynne T. T. Toyofuku, Esq.

Marr Jones & Wang

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From: [Mari Kishimoto Doi](#)
To: [JDCtestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6, Testimony in Support of Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 2:00:00 PM

September 29, 2020

-
Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair

Via Email

(JDCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)
Senate Committee on Judiciary

**Re: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION
OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS**

Hearing: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, 1 pm, Conference Room 016

Dear Senator Rhoads & Senate Committee,

I am a member of the Hawaii State Bar Association and in good standing. I am writing in support of Elizabeth Paek-Harris, nominee for District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. I have known Per Diem Judge Paek-Harris for the past 11 years during my time in the family law field. Judge Harris and I have been on opposite sides of a number of cases. I respect her as an attorney and her dedication to her clients. Judge Harris and I were able to amicably resolve each case that we had by working together to find the best possible settlement for our respective clients and their children without the need for a contested trial. I believe we were able to do so because of her fairness and willingness to listen to other sides of each case.

Judge Paek-Harris led our very active Family Law Section of the Bar as well as the Child Law Section and was a member of other committees, such as the Child Support Guidelines Update, during which time I was able to witness first-hand her dedication to the law and to the continued education of our section members. I also reaped the benefit of Judge Paek-Harris' hard work through presentations by national experts, Family Court judges and other presenters related to our field which added to my skill set and personal development as an attorney.

Since becoming a Per Diem Judge, I have appeared before Judge Paek-Harris on a number of occasions both in contested hearings and settlement and status conferences. I believe that Judge Harris demonstrates a thorough knowledge of family law and its practical application to issues involving parties and families. Having this solid background coupled with her preparedness and respectful treatment of parties and attorneys, enables Judge Paek-Harris to facilitate effective settlements and fair and well-reasoned decisions when settlement is not possible. It is clear that Judge Paek-Harris spends the time preparing for the matters before her and has on several occasions, went beyond "work hours" to help parties reach a settlement.

Judge Harris was inspiring as a practitioner and as a fellow working mother and, now as a Per Diem Judge as well. I believe that Judge Harris would be an excellent addition to the Family Court bench and respectfully request that you consider this letter in support of her nomination.

Yours Truly,

/s/ MARI L. KISHIMOTO DOI

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
JC6
Submitting For Consideration And Confirmation To The District Family Court Of
The First Circuit, Judicial Nominee
ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS
For A Term To Expire In Six Years

Before the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Date: Thursday, October 1, 2020, 1:00 p.m.
Location: State Capitol, Conference Room 016

Testifier: MEI NAKAMOTO

◇

To: Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Jarrett Keohokalole, and Other Members of the Committee

I support the appointment of Elizabeth Paek-Harris to the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

I know Ms. Paek-Harris well. I believe we were colleagues for her entire career as a family law attorney, which spanned several years. During that time, we worked together in at least two bench-bar committees. My most recent and salient work with Ms. Paek-Harris occurred during our almost-identical tenures as first-time *per diem* judges assigned to the Family Court of the First Circuit from February 2019 until February 2020. Not only did we serve at the same time, but we also shared chambers and saw each other almost every week during that year.

In every interaction with Ms. Paek-Harris, she has impressed me with her intelligence but even more with her conscientiousness, diligence, rational and objective thinking, and desire to do the right thing.

- As a family law attorney, Ms. Paek-Harris was a professional in the best sense. She was my opponent in several cases but was always courteous, well-prepared and meticulous. She advocated for her clients while inspiring me to be at my best.
- As a *per diem* judge, Ms. Paek-Harris unfailingly prepared before she sat, and her preparation was meticulous; she was not satisfied with a cursory review of the docket sheet and the motion or application at hand. Ms. Paek-Harris understood that, in family law cases the parties and their

interactions as people and litigants mattered, and knowledge of what transpired before the pending hearing was vital to appropriately address issues.

- Despite the occasional frustration with a party, attorney, or lack of time and resources, Ms. Paek-Harris remained objective, rational and focused. She diligently sought to resolve the dispute before her in a practical way that was consistent with the law.
- After a hearing, when she was faced with a challenging issue I often saw Ms. Paek-Harris not only review her detailed notes of the proceeding, but also the files, the recorded record, and the law. Her decisions in those difficult cases were the outcome of thoughtful and dispassionate consideration of the law and facts.

In addition, Ms. Paek-Harris has a sunny disposition, a good sense of humor, and is unfailingly courteous – qualities that will serve everyone well at the Family Court. Our judicial system is only as good as the confidence the community has in its ability to treat people fairly and resolve disputes impartially and in an orderly way. Judges like Elizabeth Paek-Harris are precisely the type of jurists who will serve the system, the Family Court, and the people of Hawai'i well.

Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions or if I can assist the Committee in any way.

Sincerely,



Mei Nakamoto

mei.nakamoto@gmail.com
450 S. Cherry Street, Suite 500
Denver, Colorado 80246
(303) 728-4271

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: michelle.moorhead@legalaidhawaii.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for JC6 on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM (Written Only)
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:06:06 AM

JC6

Submitted on: 9/30/2020

Testimony for on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying Remotely
Michelle Moorhead	Individual	Support	No

Your comments: Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Judiciary Committee, My name is Michelle Moorhead and I am the Managing Attorney of the Family Law Division at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii. I currently serve as the elected Chair of the Family Law Section of the Hawaii State Bar Association. Notwithstanding these affiliations, I am writing to you in my personal capacity to support, endorse and recommend that the Honorable Elizabeth Paek-Harris be confirmed as a District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit. As this Committee may be well aware, Judge Paek-Harris has acted as regular per diem judge in the domestic division since her appointment as a per diem judge. It is my personal assessment that she been doing an excellent job working with both represented and unrepresented parties. I have heard positive feedback about her from colleagues in private practice and also my employees at Legal Aid (whose clients are self-represented litigants who have appeared before Judge Paek-Harris). Judge Paek-Harris has proven herself as a fair, impartial and competent judge. She is very skilled at working with self-represented litigants and having them look at their case from an objective perspective. In my personal experience in her courtroom, I have observed her to have great command over a highly vexatious litigant, yet at the same time treating that individual with dignity and respect. She excels at settlement but also does not appear to be afraid of making difficult decisions. Prior to becoming a per diem judge at Family Court, Judge Paek-Harris and I both worked together when we represented opponents in litigation. Judge Paek-Harris was forthright and a zealous advocate. Although we were opponents, working with Judge Paek-Harris was a very positive experience and she demonstrated respect for all parties and a knowledge of the law and evidence. In sum, I am in strong support of Judge Paek-Harris being appointed as a Family Court Judge. I believe that she will be a very good asset to the bench. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Judge Paek-Harris. If you have any questions and/or comments, please feel free to contact me. Respectfully submitted, Michelle K. Moorhead

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing,

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PAUL R. MANCINI*
JAMES W. GEIGER
THOMAS D. WELCH, JR.

COUNSEL
ROSALYN LOOMIS

*A LAW CORPORATION

MANCINI, WELCH & GEIGER LLP

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September 23, 2020

Via Email (JDCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: **JC 6, Testimony in Support of Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris & Courtney Nazo**

Dear Senator Rhoads:

I reviewed the nomination list for the various First Circuit Family Court positions. I am personally familiar and have worked with two of the applicants: Elizabeth Paek-Harris and Courtney Nazo.

Elizabeth Paek-Harris is ready to be a full-time family court judge. I have served as a mediator for her when she was in private practice as a family law practitioner and an associate attorney with Bill Darrah. She is thorough, diligent, and thoughtful. She is comfortable in the divorce arena. She is willing to learn and ask questions in those legal areas that she is less familiar with. She is kind and respectful and has appropriate judicial temperament. Recently, I reviewed a temporary custody order that she issued in a particularly challenging matter that I had attempted to mediate after a contested court hearing. Her decision was extremely well-reasoned and reflected her knowledge of child development as it relates to custody. I was particularly impressed with and did not expect to see such a thorough order.

I have also served on the Child Support Guidelines Committee with Elizabeth for the past eight years. Her technology skills are impressive. The Child Support Guidelines Committee would have functioned less efficiently without her. I highly recommend her for the available vacancy.

I am also writing in support of Courtney Nazo. I have mediated several family law matters for Courtney. She is knowledgeable, professional and was of great assistance in the mediation process. She and opposing counsel were able to prepare a complicated divorce decree from the mediation term sheet without mediation assistance.

Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair

Page 2

September 23, 2020

I am happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you for your time and dedication.

Very truly yours,

MANCINI, WELCH & GEIGER



Rosalyn Loomis

RL:tlc

September 29, 2020

TO: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee On Judiciary

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH
PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, October 1, 2020, 1 PM, Conference Room 016

Dear Chair Rhoads and Senate Committee Members:

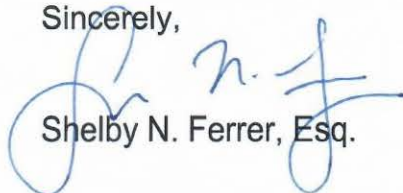
I am writing in support of the Chief Justice's nomination to appoint Elizabeth Paek-Harris to District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit. In 2013, I served as a legal extern for Mrs. Paek-Harris when she was practicing as a Family Law attorney. I am practicing as a Family Law attorney now and have carried the lessons that I learned from my short time with her into my own practice.

During my semester as her legal extern, I witnessed how she treated her clients, and potential clients, with respect and how she took the time to explain the legal concepts that guided her recommendations so that they could easily understand what was going on in their case. I believe that this skill translates as a useful and important skill to have as a judge in Family Court.

One of the main goals of Family Court is to be a place of healing for the families who find themselves in this system. Family Court issues are inherently emotionally charged. So, the litigants who come through its doors are experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety. Moreover, Family Court deals with a high volume of *pro se* litigants, many cases even having double *pro se* litigants. Judges who are not only knowledgeable, but who are able to explain those legal concepts in a respectful manner, so that litigants, especially *pro se* litigants, can easily understand goes a long way in helping to alleviate that stress and anxiety, thereby minimizing conflict so that a family can start healing. I believe that Mrs. Paek-Harris has those skills necessary to serve as an effective District Family Court Judge in the First Circuit.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Shelby N. Ferrer, Esq.

From: [Sol DelaCruz-Ferrer](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 11:39:49 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

September 29, 2020

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Soledad delaCruz-Ferrer
sdferrer@kdubm.com

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF
ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, October 1, 2020. 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 016

I am writing this letter in support of Elizabeth Paek-Harris' confirmation as a Judge of the Family Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

I have known Elizabeth for over 20 years. I met her at the beginning of her legal career, when she was hired as a legal secretary with the law firm in which I was employed as a paralegal. Over the years, I've had the pleasure to see her reach many milestones in her life, including obtaining her law degree, running a successful legal practice, and being appointed as a per diem judge.

Elizabeth has all of the credentials and skills to be a fine Family Court Judge. She is highly skilled as a legal practitioner with a keen mind and practical approach to complex and challenging issues. I've referred clients to her and they were pleased with the results. Elizabeth also has a strong sense of community, dedicating many years volunteering and supporting many community projects. She has strong core values, including fairness and impartiality. As a Family Court Judge, Elizabeth will provide great service to the people of Hawaii.

Thank you for considering this letter.

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From: [Steven Guttman](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6, Testimony re Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 11:09:42 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

September 29, 2020

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Steven Guttman

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF
ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, October 1, 2020. 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 016

This letter is written in support of the appointment of Elizabeth Paek-Harris to fill one of the current vacancies at the Family Court of the First Circuit.

I first met Ms. Paek-Harris in 1999 when she requested employment with my law firm, Law Offices of Steven Guttman. Ms. Paek-Harris was hired in October, 1999. At that time, she was considering going to law school. Before making the three year commitment, she first wanted to learn what it was like working at a law office. The following year she enrolled at the William S. Richardson School of Law.

Ms. Paek- Harris continued to be employed by my firm while she was a law student. Her employment continued after I merged my law practice with the firm then known as Kessner Duca Umbeyashi Bain & Matsunaga. Her employment continued through her graduation from law school in July, 2003.

The Kessner firm offered Ms. Paek-Harris employment as an attorney. In lieu of accepting employment with our firm, she took a clerkship with former Judge Steven Alm. Our firm again reached out to Ms. Paek-Harris when her clerkship with Judge Alm concluded. We have maintained contact with Ms. Paek-Harris, periodically checking as to her employment status. Ms. Paek-Harris had made the decision to focus her practice in the field of Family Law, which is an area outside of our firm's practice.

Over the years I have referred numerous people to Ms. Paek-Harris. The feedback I've received has always been positive.

I know Ms. Paek-Harris has been serving as a per diem judge with the Family Court. As my practice does not directly involve Family Court matters, I've not appeared before her. However, as someone who has known Ms. Paek-Harris for more than 20 years, I can comment on her character and temperament. I can state without any qualification that Ms. Paek-Harris would be an excellent appointment as a Family Court Judge.

Thank you for considering these comments.

From: [steven alm](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Testimony in Support of Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 2:26:33 PM

To: Senator Karl A. Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, 1pm, Conference Room 016

I am writing to you in strong support of the nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris as a District Family Court Judge. I have known Elizabeth for 17 years. She was my second law clerk when I was on the First Circuit Court bench. Elizabeth is very smart, thorough, detail-oriented, and professional. She is also very ethical, and committed to doing the right thing. Elizabeth was always prepared for work and followed through with every assignment she was given and made it a point of pride to get the job done and get it done right.

When she was my law clerk, we interacted every day for a year. We would discuss the law and why it was meaningful and impactful, both for the litigants and for the public at large. We talked about the importance of doing justice, and why the Rule of Law was critical.

At the start of that year, I was assigned to the Misdemeanor Jury-Demand Calendar. It was still part of the last vestige of the Master Calendar system where the responsibility of managing the calendar was shared by me and three other Circuit Court judges. This system led to many inefficiencies and a lot of forum shopping. I worked with Administrative Judge Dan Kochi to make it an Individual Calendar in my courtroom. Elizabeth was able to see, and we could discuss firsthand, how the judicial system could be changed to make it fairer and more efficient.

As a parting gift at the end of her clerkship, Elizabeth personally researched and constructed an updated and annotated copy of the Hawaii Rules of Evidence to give to me. Wow!

I recommend Elizabeth Paek-Harris to you without reservation, and look forward to years of outstanding service by her on the District Family Court bench.

Very Truly Yours,

Steven S. Alm
First Circuit Court Judge (Ret.)

From: [Wendy Ishibashi](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC 6 In Support of Nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 10:57:47 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

September 29, 2020

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Wendy Ishibashi (wishibashi@kdubm.com)

RE: JC 6, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF
ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS

HEARING: Thursday, October 1, 2020. 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 016

I have had the honor and pleasure of knowing Elizabeth Paek-Harris as a co-worker and friend for over twenty years. This letter is written in support of Elizabeth's confirmation as a Judge of the Family Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

I met Elizabeth when she was hired as a legal secretary by the law firm with which I have been affiliated as a paralegal for a number of years. Elizabeth was contemplating a career in law and wanted to obtain some hands on experience in the legal field prior to making the long term commitment to law school and life as an attorney. Fortunately for the people of Hawaii, the following year Elizabeth chose to enroll in law school, and has continued to move forward in fulfilling her commitment to the judiciary and the people of Hawaii.

Elizabeth has strong leadership, organizational and communication skills. She is an astute observer with a sharp, refined intellect. She is firm in her convictions while maintaining a keen sense of fairness, equality and compassion. She is fully committed to her family, her

friends, her colleagues and her community.

As a Family Court judge, Elizabeth will offer a positive and constructive perspective to Hawaii's Judiciary, and she will continue to enhance the Judiciary's mission to serve all who live in our Hawaii community with fairness and dignity.



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

Elizabeth Paek-Harris
District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit (JC6)

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

FROM: P. Gregory Frey
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 016
State Capitol

The Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the nomination of Elizabeth Paek-Harris for the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

The HSBA Board of Directors followed its multi-step process to inform the confirming authority of its findings on this appointment.

- Notification to the nominee of the HSBA appointment review process, which includes a questionnaire requesting educational credentials, legal and other professional work experiences, personal references; a resume; a copy of the 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.
- Notification via electronic transmission to the HSBA membership of the appointment and a request for comments on the nominee.
- Appointment of a three-person review subcommittee of HSBA Board members by the President which serves as a neutral fact-finding body to: review documentation submitted by the nominee, contact references submitted by the nominee, review comments received from the HSBA membership, and conduct follow-up member contact for clarification, if necessary, for presentation to the HSBA Board.
- Submittal of a report by the three-person review subcommittee to the President, and subsequently to the entire Board.

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Testimony of HSBA

JC6

Hearing on October 1, 2020

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- Meeting of the President, the Executive Director, and the nominee prior to the scheduled interview of the nominee by the Board.
- Interview of the nominee by the HSBA Board.
- Deliberation of the HSBA Board to determine if the nominees is qualified or unqualified.
- Submittal of the HSBA Board's recommendation to the confirming authority.

The HSBA President and the Executive Director met with Ms. Paek-Harris on September 22, 2020 to discuss the subcommittee's findings. On September 23rd, Ms. Paek-Harris was interviewed by the HSBA Board of Directors in executive session.

Documentation submitted by Ms. Paek-Harris was reviewed and the references listed were contacted for their personal opinions and observations. The comments and letters received from HSBA members reflected an affirmation of Ms. Paek-Harris in all categories of the HSBA criteria which include:

- Integrity
- Diligence
- Legal knowledge and ability
- Professional experience
- Temperament
- Financial responsibility
- Public service
- Health
- Ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position

Nominee Elizabeth Paek-Harris has built her career as a practitioner specializing in Family Law. As an advocate and per diem judge, Ms. Paek-Harris is known for courtroom and writing skills with a solid base of evidentiary knowledge, and experience in settlement conferences for complex issues including contentious divorces cases. Over her years of practice, she has been involved in paternity, child welfare, and juvenile criminal cases.

As a per diem judge, members report that Ms. Paek-Harris is thorough and professional and shows the right amount of compassion when ruling. She is reportedly firm and knows how to reach a good balance to make the parties feel that they are being heard including pro se litigants. When involved in cases with children, the children's best interest is always of paramount importance.

The Nominee is a very active member of the HSBA's Family Law Section. Of significance was her work on The Hawaii Child Support Guidelines which is utilized by the Judiciary, child support personnel, practitioners, and the public. This experience will be invaluable as the Family Court begins to design its e-filing system which will require some uniformity in forms statewide.

Ms. Paek-Harris' resolute belief and experience when dealing with issues and case disposition of applying the law to the facts presented and taking into account equity considerations presented by the parties will serve her well as a District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Testimony of HSBA

JC6

Hearing on October 1, 2020

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After the interview of the nominee, which included dialogue and questioning relating to her background, experiences, and reasons for pursuing the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit the Board of the Hawaii State Bar Association found Ms. Elizabeth Paek-Harris to be **QUALIFIED** for the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments for consideration during the deliberations and decision making of our Committee.