



Hawai'i State Legislature  
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Hearing: Wednesday 3:00 pm, February 19, 2025  
Conference Room: 225 & Via Videoconference

Subject: Testimony in Support of Gene DeMello, Jr.'s Appointment as Hawai'i Parole Board's Chair

Dear Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Gene DeMello, Jr.'s confirmation as Chair of the Hawai'i Parole Board.

Mr. DeMello is a highly qualified candidate with extensive experience in parole, reentry services, and community rehabilitation. His dedication to evidence-based practices and public safety makes him an excellent choice for this important role.

We have known Mr. DeMello for several years in his capacity as a board member of the Hawai'i Parole Authority. While participating in the annual [Parole Completion Celebration](#) at Ali'iolani Hale, Mr. DeMello has expressed genuine support and encouragement for those transitioning back into the community. He consistently demonstrated compassion and respect for people being on parole, those being discharged, and their families. He has expressed a deep commitment to their successful reintegration into society.

Additionally, his long career, and his wealth of experience in reentry services, parole supervision, and leadership, uniquely positions him to serve as Chair of the Hawai'i Parole Board. His background demonstrates a balanced approach to public safety and rehabilitation, making him an asset to the community and the criminal legal system.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to please confirm Mr. Gene DeMello, Jr. as Chair of the Hawai'i Parole Board.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Please contact me if you have any questions concerning our strong support for Mr. DeMello's confirmation.

Aloha,

Loren Walker  
Director, Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
AND REHABILITATION**  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalu Kalaima  
a Ho'oponopono Ola*  
1177 Alakea Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96813

**TOMMY JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

**Melanie Martin**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Pamela J. Sturz**  
Deputy Director  
Correctional Institutions

**Sanna Muñoz**  
Deputy Director  
Rehabilitation Services  
and  
Programs

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR MESSAGE NO. 567  
RELATING TO THE NOMINATION OF GENE DEMELLO, JR.,  
TO BE THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY

by

Tommy Johnson, Director

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 19, 2025; 3:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Via Video Conference

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

I submit testimony in support of the nomination and confirmation of Gene DeMello, Jr., as the Chairperson of the Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA), for a term ending June 6, 2028. Mr. DeMello worked in our state's judicial and community corrections field for over three decades in various positions of increasing responsibilities and authority.

Mr. DeMello's work experience with John Howard Associates (8/1985 – 12/1988), HPA as a Parole Officer (1/1989 – 12/1991), the U.S. Probation Office of the U.S. District Court here in Hawaii'i (1/1992 – 6/2021), coupled with his current experience with HPA as a member of the parole board, and as the interim Chairperson (3/2021 - present), makes him the ideal candidate to lead HPA as the Chairperson. He clearly possesses in-depth knowledge, well-honed leadership and managerial skills, and interpersonal skills required of the position.

I strongly urge the committee to recommend advice and consent for this superbly qualified nominee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Governor's Message No.567 and Mr. DeMello.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
**HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY**  
*Ka 'Ākena Palola o Hawai'i*  
1177 Alakea Street, First Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

GENE DEMELLO, JR.  
INTERIM CHAIR

MILTON H. KOTSUBO  
JENNIFER M. MERKLE  
LINDA L. RICH  
LOUIS M. CHING  
MEMBERS

COREY J. REINCKE  
ADMINISTRATOR

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 567  
RELATING TO GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE GENE DEMELLO, JR .

By: Gene DeMello, Jr.

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 19, 2025 – 3:00 p.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before the Committee for confirmation as Chairperson of the Hawaii Paroling Authority. I would like to thank Governor Green for his trust and confidence in making this nomination. I served as a parole board member from 2021 through 2024. On August 1, 2024, I began serving as Interim Chairperson.

I have thirty nine years experience. I served as a federal probation officer and state parole officer, performed law enforcement duties, developed and provided offender re-entry services. I have worked in leadership positions at the management and executive management levels. I have a working knowledge of the principles and strategies of Evidence Based Practices (EBP) that are effective to reduce recidivism.

I believe in the mission of the Paroling Authority. My decisions for punishment are to achieve accountability and public safety interests, and to foster rehabilitation and re-entry opportunities. In my tenure as a board member and Interim Chairperson, I understand the challenges and barriers inmates face to successful re-entry into our community. My top priorities include enhancing re-entry services through collaborative and comprehensive release planning with inmates, case managers and parole officers, and to reduce HPA's revocation rate and lower recidivism.

I bring to the Paroling Authority a retrospective and prospective knowledge base of effective and ineffective strategies for making minimum sentencing and release decisions, and to facilitate re-entry and supervision strategies to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Committee on Public Safety  
and Military Affairs  
February 19, 2025  
Page 2

As the Chairperson, I will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders. I will serve with integrity, loyalty, and dedication to the mission. I have no personal conflicts of interest that would hinder serving as Chairperson.

Thank you for your consideration of GM 567.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
**HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY**  
*Ka 'Ākena Palola o Hawai'i*  
1177 Alakea Street, First Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

GENE DEMELLO, JR.  
INTERIM CHAIR

MILTON H. KOTSUBO  
JENNIFER M. MERKLE  
LINDA L. RICH  
LOUIS M. CHING  
MEMBERS

COREY J. REINCKE  
ADMINISTRATOR

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 567  
RELATING TO GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE GENE DEMELLO, JR.

By: Corey J. Reincke, Administrator  
Hawaii Paroling Authority

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 19, 2025 – 3:00 p.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

As the Administrator of the Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA), I am providing testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of Governor Green's nomination of Gene DeMello Jr. to serve as the Chairperson with the Hawaii Paroling Authority.

Mr. DeMello Jr. brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from his employment with the Hawaii Paroling Authority as a former Parole Officer, the U.S Probation Office in the State of Hawaii, combined with the experience as a member of the parole board for over three (3) years. Mr. DeMello Jr. will provide a sound foundation with the level of expertise and insights that will make him a valuable asset to HPA.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of the Governor's Message 567 for the confirmation of Mr. DeMello Jr. as the Chairperson of the Hawaii Paroling Authority.

**GM-567**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 6:45:26 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/19/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Edmund "Fred" Hyun	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

**Aloha** Chair Elefante, Vice-Chair Wakai, Committee Members.

1. name is Edmund “FRED” Hyun, and I strongly support Gene DeMello Jr to serve as Chairperson of the Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA). As you know, the Board is a quasi-judicial body serving as the Central paroling authority for Hawai’I’s adult offenders. The Chair’s position is challenging and demanding, balancing continued incarceration, re-entry/supervision, and public safety. As the former HPA Chair, I have worked with Mr.DeMello and can attest to his professional work ethic and, more importantly, his character and fairness in decision-making. His previous experience as an HPA Parole Officer and Federal Probation Officer/Supervisor/Trainer, coupled with his 4 years as an HPA Board member, provides a solid foundation to address the rigors of the position. As an active Association of Paroling Authorities International (APAI) member since 2021, Mr. DeMello currently serves on the Professional Development Committee, networking with Chairs from other States and Countries and soliciting resources to present their expertise at annual training conferences.

Mr. DeMello is deserving of becoming the 9th Chair since 1977.

I support Gene DeMello, Jr., for the Parole Board Chairperson position for the Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA). Upon my retirement in 2013 from the Federal Probation Office of Hawaii, I was appointed by former Governors Neil Abercrombie and David Ige for a total term of 8 years as a Board Member for the HPA. I was also appointed temporarily as the Chairperson for the Parole Board in 2013. I feel I have the experience to make a recommendation for a qualified candidate for the Chairperson position for HPA. I have known Mr. DeMello for more than 20 years as U.S. Probation Officers for the U.S. Probation Office for the District of Hawaii. I have watched him rise to the levels of a Field Agent, a Specialist Agent in charge of Firearms and Electronic Monitoring, Supervisor for the Supervision Unit, and Deputy Chief U.S. Probation Officer. Upon federal retirement, Mr. DeMello was appointed as a Board Member of HPA. Mr. DeMello understands enforcement and treatment modality policies for people on court and parole supervision. He understands data and the latest research locally and nationally as it relates to the population on community supervision. He understands the available local resources such as treatment programs to serve the parolee and protect the community. He understands who the stakeholders are and works well with them to address the needs and concerns of the parolee, police, corrections, attorneys, and the community. Mr. DeMello has completed numerous training hours as an employee of the State of Hawaii (career started as a State Parole Officer) and the Federal Government (U.S. Probation Officer) in this specific field of working with parolees. I would direct your attention to his resume for more details. I believe Mr. DeMello's strength lies in the Assessment of Risk of the parolees based on his work experiences and training in this area, but more importantly, his innate ability to discern the truth of a person is a special gift. HPA and the State of Hawaii are blessed to have this talented individual who has dedicated his career to this parole population and has repeatedly demonstrated his commitment to serve and protect the parolee and the community. I am optimistic that Mr. DeMello as the Chairperson will continue the great work done by the previous Chairperson Ed (Fred) Hyun as a continuity of excellence for HPA and the State of Hawaii.

**GM-567**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 1:14:13 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/19/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Neil Tsukayama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Gene DeMello as Chairperson of the Hawaii Paroling Authority. His judgement is beyond reproach. His experience in the field is unequaled in this state.

**GM-567**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 2:50:53 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/19/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Derek M. Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Excellent administrator/.

**GM-567**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 4:16:09 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/19/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Florence Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 17, 2025

Honorable Members of the PSM:

I support the nomination and confirmation of Gene Demello as Chairperson of the Hawaii Paroling Authority. His years of experience, ongoing initiatives, leadership abilities, and dedication to his job is proof he is an exemplary candidate for this position.

I am truly blessed to have known him as a my son's supervisor for many years and as an outstanding member of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Florence Kim

**GM-567**

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 7:11:52 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/19/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
A Haunani Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have known Mr. Gene Demello for over 25 years and have always known him to be an honest, trustworthy, and reliable man who acts with integrity and ethics. Mr. Demello would be a great asset as Chairperson of the Hawai'i Paroling Authority.

**GM-567**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 2:50:57 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/19/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Rich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Sen. Brandon Elefante, Chair, Sen. Glen Wakai, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee

My name is Linda Rich and I am writing in strong support of Gene Demello's appointment as Chair of the Board of the Hawaii Paroling Authority. (GM567)

Mr. Demello is knowledgeable, experienced, and wise. Most importantly, he is forward thinking and solution focused, identifying barriers to achieving optimal outcomes for inmates and working with the HPA administrator to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the department. He approaches every hearing with a blend of realism, compassion, and problem solving. I urge you to approve his appointment

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Linda Rich

**LATE**

**GM-567**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:26:35 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/19/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kevin Teruya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Strong SUPPORT of GENE DEMELLO, Jr for Chairperson of the Hawaii Parolling Authority GM567**

My name is Kevin Teruya, having worked with Gene DeMello Jr in the Federal Government, I know him to be an impartial arbiter interested in both community safety and the positive reentry of parolees into the community. I respectfully ask the Legislature to confirm Gene DeMello Jr as Chairperson of the Hawaii Parolling Authority.