

February 20, 2025

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura  
Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services  
415 S. Beretania St, Room 213  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Nomination to the State Rehabilitation Council (GM628)

Dear Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura,

I am honored to be nominated to serve on the State Rehabilitation Council and to assist the Senate with its confirmation process in your request to answer the following questions.

**(1) Why do you wish to be a member of the State Rehabilitation Council?**

I am passionate about working with people with disabilities, in helping them create a life they can thrive in. I want to continue in this field for many more years to come and becoming a member of the State Rehabilitation Council will allow me the opportunity to work collaboratively in building partnerships with key stakeholders across the state. In turn, this will help to further strengthen the relationships in the Vocational Rehabilitation program to increase success for people with disabilities in becoming employed in fully integrated, competitive employment.

**(2) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the State Rehabilitation Council?**

The role and responsibilities of a member of the State Rehabilitation Council are to advise the Vocational Rehabilitation agency of performance affecting consumers to achieve employment outcomes, develop and review State goals and priorities, and analyze the effectiveness of Vocational Rehabilitation programs and consumer satisfaction.

**(3) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the State Rehabilitation Council, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member of the State Rehabilitation Council.**

I believe that I am qualified to serve as a member of the State Rehabilitation Council because of my experience working with individuals who face barriers to employment and experience as a team leader and an executive of a service provider agency. The organization I work for provides services, including employment services to people with disabilities through both Developmental Disabilities Division and Department of Vocational Rehabilitation which allows me to have diverse perspectives.

**(4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?**

During my term of service, I hope to strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders and carry out the expectations of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and

participate in a joint effort to communicate and address the needs of consumers and employers.

**(5) Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the State Rehabilitation Council?**

Three qualities that best describe me are honesty, passion, and visionary. These qualities allow me to stay focused on the mission and vision and what needs to be accomplished, collaborate and effectively communicate and understand diverse belief systems and perspectives. This also allows for building positive relationships with others, which are all qualities and abilities that are beneficial to the State Rehabilitation Council.

**(6) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the State Rehabilitation Council?**

In my current position, I've had the opportunity to give my testimony in front of the Hawai'i County Council as to why our proposed program was worthy of grant funding. I explained the facts of the program and ultimately who would benefit from the funds, and what impact it would make on their lives and our community as a whole. When you're passionate about something, it makes it easier to articulate your vision, and advocate and make your voice heard and the voices of the people you serve. This experience was an opportunity to be visible in our community, advocate for the people we serve, and be a voice for all people with disabilities. This experience will be a benefit to the Council as they too are a voice for people with disabilities, and as a member I will have the ability to have discussions, collaborate, and make decisions at the State level.

**(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the State Rehabilitation Council? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?**

At this time I do not foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during my service on the State Rehabilitation Council. Should the situation arise, I would be completely transparent, open for discussion, and address the situation immediately.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve the people of Hawai'i and be a voice to the people we serve.

Sincerely,

Tira Kamaka  
Vice President of Program Services  
Arc of Kona

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



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 23, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director  
Lea Dias, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

SUBJECT: **GM 628 – RELATING TO CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, TIRA KAMAKA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2027.**

Hearing: Monday, February 24, 2025, 1:05 p.m.  
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) strongly supports the nomination and confirmation of Tira Kamaka to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

**PURPOSE:** The SRC was established by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The SRC works in partnership with the DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) on services that address the employment needs of individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Kamaka is seeking her second term appointment to the SRC as a representative of the Community Rehabilitation Program Service Providers per section 348-8(a)(4), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), as established under section 796d of 29 U.S. Code § 725, and she resides in Hawaii County, satisfying the requirement of section 348-8(a), HRS, that the "council shall include at least one member from each county."

Ms. Kamaka is the Vice President of Program Services at ARC of Kona, a private

nonprofit organization for persons with disabilities. She is responsible for the overall professional operations and delivery of Medicaid Waiver Home & Community Based service provision on Hawaii Island. Ms. Kamaka evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of programs while providing ongoing feedback, mentoring, guidance, supervision, and professional development to program leadership staff and helping to enhance the organization by staying abreast of developments in the field of disabilities.

Ms. Kamaka is committed to helping persons with disabilities achieve the fullest possible independence and participation in society through a diverse range of support, operational, and programmatic activities that support the SRC's mission to increase employment, enhance independence, and improve the quality of life for every person with a disability.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of Ms. Kamaka's nomination to the State Rehabilitation Council.

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OCEAN VIEW  
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Federal ID  
99-0108896

February 21, 2025

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225

**Re: GM 628: In Support of the Confirmation of TIRA KAMAKA to the State Rehabilitation Council**

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Committee Members;

Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support of Gubernatorial Nominee Tira Kamaka to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). As the President/CEO, I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Arc of Kona.

The SRC was established in the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The SRC provides an external, consumer-oriented perspective as it acts in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) on services that address the employment needs of individuals with disabilities. Ms. Kamaka is employed with our agency and is seeking re-appointment to the SRC for her second term representing Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP's). CRP's are one of the important external, consumer-oriented perspectives required to be represented on the SRC.

The Arc of Kona is non-profit organization that provides services and supports to individuals with disabilities that encourages personal growth and quality of life through empowerment and choice throughout the Island of Hawaii. Ms. Kamaka has worked at the Arc of Kona for nine years and is a valuable member of our team. She was first hired as a Service Supervisor and was quickly promoted to the Director of Program Services. Six years ago, she was promoted to Vice President of Program Services where she continues to excel and passionately support people with disabilities.

Ms. Kamaka is an authentic, optimistic leader who has earned the trust and respect of many through her selfless service to others. She is talented in developing relationships and partnerships, communicates effectively, understands diverse perspectives and beliefs, and has a high level of emotional intelligence. Ms. Kamaka has strong ethical and moral principles, is kind and thoughtful in her dealings with others, is a strong advocate, and continuously demonstrates that she is committed to the rights of, and improving services for, people with disabilities.

Based on Ms. Kamaka's experience, skills, and positive personal character, I know she will continue to be of great value to people with disabilities, the State Rehabilitation Council, and the State of Hawaii.

Sincerely,



Michèle L. Ku  
President/CEO



*"Expanding the Possibilities"*  
*"Ho'o Nui Ka Hiki"*