

**Testimony of
U.S. Rep. Jill Tokuda**

LATE

**Before the
Senate Committee on Judiciary**

**Tuesday, April 22, 2025
At 9:15 AM**

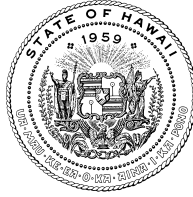
Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of Judge Karen Nakasone's nomination to be Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals for the State of Hawaii.

Judge Nakasone has served on the Intermediate Court of Appeals since her appointment in 2020. Prior to 2020, she served on the First Circuit Court and was a trial judge for nine years in both criminal and civil cases. Her years at the Intermediate Court of Appeals, combined with her service in other courts, has given her the skill and experience to be a successful Chief Judge for the second highest court in our state.

Prior to her decades on the bench, Judge Nakasone also spent 15 years as a public defender in Hawaii. This experience undoubtedly provides a helpful perspective that will enrich the state judiciary and her tenure as Chief Judge.

Given her years of experience, judicial temperament, and track record in court, I have no doubt that Judge Nakasone is qualified to be an excellent Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals and I offer my full support for her nomination.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Testimony of
Josh Green, M.D.
Governor, State of Hawai'i

Before the
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Tuesday, April 22, 2025
9:15 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

In consideration of
Governor's Message No. 790

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Governor's Message No. 790, the appointment of Karen Nakasone to be the Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA) for a 10-year term.

Judge Nakasone has served as an Associate Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals since November 2020 and was previously a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit on Oahu from November 2011 through her appointment to the ICA. Judge Nakasone also served as a trial judge for nine years in both the Civil and Criminal Divisions as well as a law clerk to the Honorable Simeon Acoba Jr. for the ICA and as a criminal trial and appellate lawyer for the State Office of the Public Defender.

I am confident that Judge Nakasone's hard work and stellar track record has demonstrated that she has earned this appointment, and the comments of support that were submitted on her behalf confirm that she is the right choice for this position. I am pleased to offer my full support of her nomination.

Mahalo for your consideration.

JON N. IKENAGA
PUBLIC DEFENDER

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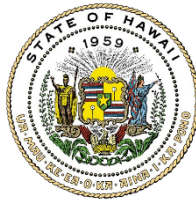
APPELLATE DIVISION
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**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

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April 20, 2025

**RE: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone
as Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii's Intermediate Court of Appeals**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone's nomination for the position of Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I first met Judge Nakasone in 2007 when I began my career at the Office of the Public Defender. At that time, she was a senior attorney in the Appellate Division and had already established herself as an extremely valued resource for the state-wide office. To those who know her and had the opportunity to work with her, it is no surprise that she is before this committee for consideration as the Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

After she was appointed as a Circuit Court Judge, I regularly appeared before her after she took over a criminal calendar. Having appeared in front of countless judges throughout my 18-year career, I was consistently impressed with Judge Nakasone's preparation, thoughtfulness, demeanor and professionalism. Whether Judge Nakasone ruled for or against me, I always understood the rationale for her decisions. It was consistently clear that she took every argument under consideration and was thoughtful and deliberate about her rulings.

Since becoming a judge and since her transition to the Appellate Court, Judge Nakasone has also made it a priority to stay connected to the broader legal community. She regularly attends bar-related events, conferences, and forums and has a deep respect for the practitioners and parties.

Judge Nakasone has my utmost respect and my strongest support. I am honored to write in support of her nomination.

JON N. IKENAGA
PUBLIC DEFENDER

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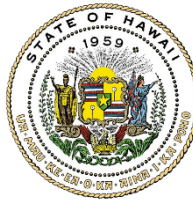
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STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

April 21, 2025

LATE

HAYLEY Y. C. CHENG
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GM 790: Consideration and Confirmation as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals, Gubernatorial Appointee Karen T. Nakasone

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **strongly supports the confirmation of Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.**

Judge Nakasone was an attorney at the OPD from 1996 to 2011. During her time at the OPD, Judge Nakasone progressed through all trial levels at the office and then served as a senior Appellate Section attorney. As a trial and appellate attorney, Judge Nakasone served the OPD with distinction and dedication to the mission of the office. Judge Nakasone exhibited the highest levels of work ethic, diligence and professional integrity.

As a circuit court judge, Judge Nakasone was well respected by attorneys who appeared before her and established a stellar reputation for fairness, integrity and professionalism.

Most recently, Judge Nakasone was deservedly promoted to the Intermediate Court of Appeals in 2020. Judge Nakasone's decisions were legally sound, well-reasoned and fair. Although the workload of the ICA judges is daunting, Judge Nakasone maintained ties with the bar and the community and regularly attended professional events, conference and forums.

In every position she has held, Judge Nakasone has displayed the highest levels of legal knowledge, competence, ethics and integrity. Judge Nakasone's character and qualifications for the position of Chief Judge are beyond reproach. The OPD strongly supports the confirmation of Karen T. Nakasone to the position of Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/18/2025 1:02:48 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I submit this testimony in support of the appointment and confirmation of Judge Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I have known Judge Nakasone since she was a state public defender. I am familiar with her work as an attorney and judge.

I served 16 years on the ICA with three different chief judges - Jim Burns, Mark Recktenwald and Craig Nakamura. I know what it takes to be an effective chief judge on that court. Judge Nakasone has all the qualities, skills and experience to be an outstanding Chief Judge of the ICA.

I urge this Committee to recommend her confirmation by the Senate.

Mahalo, Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/18/2025 6:05:14 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
WalterS. Kirimitsu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a retired judge of the Hawai'i State Intermediate court of Appeals and have personally known Judge Karen Nakasone for at least the past 25 years. Based on my experience with Judge Nakasone , and personal knowledge of her character and integrity, I strongly believe she would be a perfect and outstanding Chief Judge of the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals. She is a perfect fit for this position. I strongly support her appointment.

Walter S. Kirimitsu

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/18/2025 6:52:54 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Marksl.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I write in strong support of the nomination of Judge Nakasone - she is a star!! She is a thoughtful and knowledgeable judge. She is understated at the same time as being an exceedingly strong individual who would be an exceptional asset as the Chief Judge of the ICA. She is widely respected by the members of the bar and her judicial colleagues. She has the administrative and people skills to excel as the Chief Judge. She has experience as a ICA judge and experience as an appellate lawyer, as well. I strongly urge you to confirm her nomination to become Chief Judge of the ICA. The people of Hawai'i will be well served by her continued service in this important role

Respectfully submitted,

Judge Victoria S. Marks (Ret.)

Circuit Court of the First Circuit

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/18/2025 8:12:23 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rhonda Nishimura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i previously submitted highly favorable testimony on behalf of Karen Nakasone for each of her prior judicial appointments, circuit court judge and as an associate judge to the Intermediate Court of Appeals. My strong commendation is based upon my personal first-hand observation when Ms. Nakasone intially appeared in my criminal court in the late 1990's, early 2000's, arguing with precision, clarity and conciseness, demonstrating a professionalism far beyond her youth. Her verbal dexterity was equally matched by her excellent writings. I next became reacquainted with Ms. Nakasone upon her appointment to the circuit court in 2011, assigned to the civil division. Although Ms. Nakasone's entire legal career was with the Public Defender's Office, to avoid the appearance of any conflict of interest, she was initially placed within the civil trial division. There is no playbook or benchbook on how to handle hundreds of cases in the civil division, ranging from products liability, auto accidents, contracts, complex litigation, and the list goes on. However, Ms. Nakasone, with her usual stellar work ethic, discipline and her high degree of time management skill, tackled this difficult and demanding case load. I personally observed Ms. Nakasone's judicial trajectory, having sat as a circuit court judge from 2003 through 2017. My commendation for Ms. Nakasone upon her appointment as an associate judge to the Intermediate Court of Appeals in 2020 remained unchanged. The announcement by Gov. Green , although unsurprising, is greted with a warm aloha. Ms. Nakasone represents a rare breed, having been appointed by 3 different gorvernors, Gov. Abercrombie, Gov. Ige, and now Gov. Green, each recognizing her high degree of caliber and skill set. On a personal note, my son and Ms. Nakasone's twin daughters, in the same age bracket, both performed for their band/orchestra within their respective high schools. Ms. Nakasone always made time, again being a parent volunteer extraordinaire. Therefore, I strongly urge Chairperson Rhoads and respective judiciary committee members to support Ms. Nakasone's appointment as a Chief Judge to the Intermdiate Court of Appeals.

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/19/2025 4:10:08 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary W.B. Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhodes:

I respectfully submit this to urge the confirmation of Judge Karen Nakasone as an ICA judge. She has impeccable credentials and she possesses a superior intellect and an exquisite sense of fairness.

Judge Nakasone represents everything our community wants and needs in an appellate court jurist. Having served Hawaii for the past 25 years as a circuit court judge, I have had the privilege of working along side Judge Nakasone for a portion of that time . I have been impressed by her judicial independence and decision making skills. She is fearless on the bench. No issue is too big for her. She brings her brilliant legal acumen and her kamaaina compassion to the job every day. And she is a gifted writer.

Judge Nakasone brings a calm, controlled, and dignified judicial temperament and a firm hand to every matter that comes before her. And notwithstanding all of her outstanding qualities, she is among the most humble jurists on the Hawaii bench.

The Hawaii appellate courts needs strong jurists with exceptional qualifications and skills. Judge Nakasone has been a credit to the circuit court and the ICA as one of their most outstanding judges. She has quietly earned this opportunity to continue to serve the people of Hawaii as an appellate court judge. She exudes integrity and trustworthiness.

I do not have the words to sufficiently express Judge Nakasone's absolute qualifications to fill this esteemed position.

I thank you for this opportunity to to share my thoughts about an outstanding nominee for this ICA appointment.

Respectfully yours,

Judge Gary W.B. Chang, (Ret.)

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/19/2025 4:11:51 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael A. Town	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha all. This is in strong support of Judge Karen Nakasone as chief judge of the ICA. She is well known and highly regarded as a well prepared, effective, patient and knowledgeable judge and advocate for justice and as an exemplary neutral and leader. Over the many years she tried cases in my court and represented clients at parole hearings, my staff, other counsel and court personnel regarded her as outstanding. Even in the toughest cases she exemplified fairness and knowledge. I recommend her confirmation without qualification. She will lead the ICA very professionally!! Thank you for considering her! Respectfully, Circuit Judge Michael A. Town (retired)

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 3:29:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marie Milks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I submit this testimony in strong support of the nomination of Judge Karen Nakasone to be Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I have known her for almost 30 years, since she first appeared before me as a Deputy Public Defender when I served as a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit. She was an attorney I always looked forward to - as she was professional, civil, courteous, well-prepared and ethical in her practice.

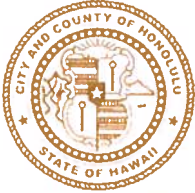
When she was first appointed to the bench, I was retired, but I then had the opportunity to co-mediate a case with her. I was able to see her as a practicing judge and she did not disappoint.

What is remarkable is that for all these many years, I have not heard one complaint about Judge Nakasone, either as an attorney or a jurist. Most of all, she has an impeccable reputation and is a valuable member of our judiciary.

It is my expectation that she will continue to serve with the highest degree of integrity, with fairness to all litigants who appear before her and with the utmost regard for individual rights and the rule of law.

I am unable to appear in person, but know that she has supporters that will offer the best comment about her qualifications and competence.

Thank you. Marie N. Milks, Judge (retired)



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

530 S. KING ST. STE. 202, HONOLULU, HI 96813

TOMMY WATERS
CHAIR & PRESIDING OFFICER
LUNA HO'OMALU
HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
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April 17, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Sent via Email

RE: Letter of Support for the Nomination of Judge Karen T. Nakasone to the Seat of Chief Justice of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members,

With this letter, I would like to convey my strong support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone's nomination to be selected Chief Justice of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I first met Judge Nakasone in law school, and then we worked as colleagues in the Office of the Public Defender. As colleagues, I saw firsthand Judge Nakasone's legal skills, staunch work ethic, and dedication to the art of being an effective and successful trial lawyer. Judge Nakasone eventually received a merit-based promotion to a Level 4 Public Defender, in which she was assigned to the most difficult and serious cases. After leaving my position as a Public Defender, I met Judge Nakasone again while I was a member of the Judicial Selection Commission, and she was appointed to her first judgeship in 2011 by Governor Abercrombie. Since that time, I would occasionally argue cases before her in court when she served as a criminal trial judge.

In all of my interactions and dealings with her, Judge Nakasone has always conducted herself in the most fair and unbiased way, holding herself to the highest standard of professional and respectable manner. She is extremely thoughtful of others, as well as mindful of her surroundings and the people with whom she interacts. Judge Nakasone is open-minded and listens well to the arguments and sides that are presented to her. She is always aware of her position in any decision-making matter. As a lawyer, I know many fellow attorneys who agree that Judge Nakasone is one of the most honest and trustworthy people we know. I have yet to meet someone who does not share the same high regard and respect that I have for Judge Nakasone. She is one of the most stable, steady, and even-keeled people that I have the pleasure of knowing, and I admire her integrity, excellent work ethic and shining character. She is truly one of the best people I know and I am proud to consider her a friend.

Thank you for considering my letter during this process. If you have any further questions or concerns about my comments, please feel free to contact me.

Mahalo,

Tommy Waters
Chair, Honolulu City Council

Tuesday, April 22, 2025
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Bill Hoshijo

Re: G.M. No. 790

I am writing in strong support of judicial nominee Karen T. Nakasone. Ms. Nakasone is an experienced attorney and judge of impeccable character. She is extremely bright and has a sharp legal mind. She is hard-working and well-respected by her peers. If appointed, she will be a strong Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals, much to the benefit of the legal profession, the Court as an institution, and the broader community.

I served as the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) from 1997 through my retirement in March 2023. The HCRC is responsible for enforcement of our state civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state-funded services. Prior to my tenure at the HCRC, I served for thirteen years as the Executive Director of Na Loio, a nonprofit public interest law organization that provided access to services and representation for the immigrant poor.

I have known Ms. Nakasone since the mid-1990s. In her work as a Deputy Public Defender, she had extensive trial experience in both jury and bench trials, the kind of litigation experience that should be a prerequisite for any judicial appointment. Her early legal work honed her skills as an effective writer and advocate. Prior to her appointment to the Circuit Court in 2011, Ms. Nakasone built a strong record of community service, advocacy, and leadership, exhibiting principled commitment and courage by speaking out for justice for even unpopular marginalized minorities.

Judge Nakasone's thirteen years on the bench, nine years in the Circuit Court and four years on the Intermediate Court of Appeals, have prepared her and will serve her well if she is elevated to serve as Chief Judge of the ICA. Her excellent research and writing skills are a reflection of her clarity of thought and firm grasp of legal analysis. As a judge she is deliberate but not indecisive. Judge Nakasone

has a remarkable disposition and temperament – she is humble, engaging, and collegial.

Without reservation, I recommend Karen T. Nakasone for nomination to serve as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Thank you for your consideration.

David Ige

8th GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

P. O. Box 1356, Aiea, HI 96701
(880) 555-0188

April 22, 2025

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

To: Senator Karl Rhodes, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: GM 790 Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge Intermediate Court of Appeals

Dear Chair Rhodes and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I write in strong support of the confirmation of Karen Tooko Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

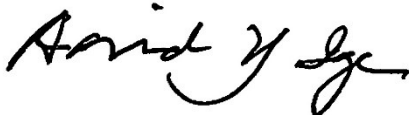
Ms. Nakasone is well qualified to serve as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. She has dedicated her professional legal career to serving the people of Hawaii, first as a public defender, then as a Civil and Criminal Trial Judge in the Circuit Court, and most recently as an Associate Judge in the Intermediate Court of Appeals. Her extensive experience has prepared her to lead as Chief Judge.

Ms. Nakasone is a hard worker, diligent, and highly intelligent. She is humble, easy to work with, and is fair and even handed in dealing with people. All of these qualities will help her be successful as Chief Judge.

She has also been a very active member of our community, from karate and kendo clubs, to cultural organizations like the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii and the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, Karen invests in making our community better.

I urge you to advise and consent to the nomination of Karen Tooko Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Sincerely,



David Y. Ige
Former Governor
State of Hawaii

April 21, 2025

To: Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Neil Abercrombie

Re: GM 790 - Testimony in Support, Chief Judge, Hawai'i
Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA)
Karen Nakasone

I always feel a sense of gratefulness when I'm asked to recommend someone whom I respect and value both professionally and personally for high office. That my evaluation is thought of in a positive light by the person seeking my support is gratifying.

But, in this instance, where Judge Karen Nakasone is making the request of me, I cannot think of an occasion when I was more enthusiastically motivated.

Her Judicial legal record is outstanding and recognized as such by her nomination. A glance at her resume regarding her background as a Circuit Court Judge -a post for which I nominated her in 2011 in both criminal and civil trials and litigation is second to none.

I appointed her on the basis of her outstanding background as a Deputy Public Defender with seven (7) years of trial experience in over five thousand (5,000) cases dealing with everything from petty misdemeanors to murder. She had eight (8) years of experience before the ICA and the Hawaii Supreme Court in appellate litigation as well as serving as counsel in post-conviction hearings before the Hawaii Paroling Authority.

With Judge Nakasone's five years on the ICA, I don't believe you can find a deeper or broader foundation in preparation for the responsibility of being Chief Judge.

All that is the professional side - excellent in every aspect but I need to emphasize the private side as well that made a key impression on me as I considered her nomination. The values she holds and lives by are graphically illuminated in her life story before her professional legal life began.

Every working day of her life as a Judge has vindicated that decision. Your favorable consideration of her nomination will bring credit to your good judgement and honor to the legacy of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

The people of Hawaii and the cause of justice for them will never be better served.

With Great Aloha
Neil Abercrombie
Governor 2010-2014
Email: governor.neil@gmail.com

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 8:13:37 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Taniguchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 20, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary

State Capitol, Conference Room 225

Chair Rhoads and Committee members,

I would like to testify in strong support of GM 790, confirming Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge for the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have known Judge Nakasone for a number of years and have participated in her previous confirmations to judicial appointments. I believe that she is well qualified and has served the State and the State Judiciary well.

I have worked with her in her efforts to support public schools and the Roosevelt High School band program in particular. She was always persistent in her support and provided strong leadership to the band's parent organization. I also see her at various community events where she serves as an officiating officer for groups like the Hawai'i United Okinawan Association.

I believe that Judge Nakasone will work hard and make a great Chief Judge. I fully support her nomination and urge that she be confirmed.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Aloha,

Brian Taniguchi

2140 Armstrong Street

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/18/2025 12:33:07 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Sayama	Testifying for Chozen-ji, International Zen Dojo	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chozen-ji, International Zen Dojo

3565 Kalihi Street

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

April 19, 2025

Dear Chair Rhoads and Vice-chair Gabbard,

It is with great pleasure and pride, as her Zen teacher and Abbot of Chozen-ji, International Zen Dojo, that I recommend Karen Nakasone to you for the position of Chief Judge of the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

1. has trained at Chozen-ji for many years, and despite the demands on her as a judge and mother of two girls, practices Kendo, and teaches Karate. She underwent *sesshin*, a six day intensive meditation training designed to make a person transcend their self-imposed limits. The hours of sitting in meditation are long; the time to sleep is short; and the concentration required in acts of daily living is relentless. In a good *sesshin* everyone reaches a point where they believe they cannot do it and want to give up. By the second day had reached this point, but her background in martial arts and her shame about quitting, made giving up impossible. She persevered and in completing *sesshin* found deeper sources of strength and inspiration.

1. incident is illustrative of Karen's kindness. A plum tree at the temple was withering away. Karen's mother suggested that the dirt around the roots of the tree be replaced with new, fertile soil. Karen brought her two daughters to dig out the old dirt, put several bags of soil in, and build a cute circle around the tree with pieces of brick. The tree is thriving and even flowers in season. Karen is one of the few students who come up to weed the grounds regularly despite it being an impossible task.

I don't want to talk about myself, but perhaps knowing my background might lend more credibility to my recommendation of Karen. I am third generation in Hawai'i, graduated as a United States Presidential Scholar from Punahou despite my father never owning a car, graduated from Yale summa cum laude, have a PhD from the University of Michigan in clinical psychology, authored several books, served on the boards of City Bank and Central Pacific Bank, and worked in executive positions in healthcare for over 30 years. From my perspective, Karen is exceptional in the values, integrity, conscientiousness, and wisdom she will bring to this position.

Presiding over the courtroom, seeing 180 degrees, judging from her heart according to the Aloha Spirit and judging from her intellect with an intuition which transcends the dualism of rationality, Karen is the kind of judge who will help keep Hawai'i the kind of place we grew up in and love.

Sincerely,

Sayama Daian



I am writing on behalf of the Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights in strong support of Karen Nakasone's appointment as Chief Judge of the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

The Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights supports individuals, programs and policies that ensure equal access to justice, civil rights, diversity and inclusion. We are very pleased to support Karen Nakasone's appointment as Chief Judge to the ICA. Ms. Nakasone has excellent training and extensive legal experience and has earned a reputation for her intelligence, integrity and being fair as a judge. I am grateful for her community service and leadership qualities that I observed over the years (e.g. her work with the Access to Justice and her past leadership with JACL).

Thank you for this opportunity to express our strong support for Karen Nakasone.

Amy Agbayani, Co- Chair



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE, HONOLULU CHAPTER

P.O. Box 1291, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96807

jaclhon@gmail.com
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April 18, 2025

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To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Logan Narikawa, President
Japanese American Citizens League, Honolulu Chapter

Re: Support of Gubernatorial Appointee, Judge Karen T. Nakasone, for Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members,

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Honolulu Chapter strongly supports the confirmation of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

JACL is the oldest and largest Asian Pacific American civil rights organization in the U.S. Established in 1929, to challenge racism and bigotry directed against Japanese Americans, the Honolulu chapter works to protect the civil and human rights of all people.

Judge Nakasone is a past president and director of the JACL, Honolulu Chapter. During her time as board president, she provided balanced and strong leadership in addressing the complex civil rights issues facing our community. She was also admired as a mentor who fostered the development of less experienced board members. Judge Nakasone's extensive experience as a Deputy Public Defender, Circuit Court Judge, and Intermediate Court of Appeals Associate Judge, taken together with her principled leadership of the JACL, Honolulu Chapter, evidence a unique ability to analyze legal issues from a variety of perspectives, while ensuring just and equitable application of the law. JACL Honolulu has the utmost confidence in her ability to serve the people of Hawai'i in the seat of Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

The JACL, Honolulu Chapter strongly supports the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone's nomination and respectfully recommends her confirmation as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Sincerely,

Logan Narikawa
President
JACL, Honolulu Chapter



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Attorneys at Law

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Alan M. Goda*

Charles W. Gall*
Neal T. Gota
Charles D. Hunter
Robert K. Ichikawa*
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David M. Louie*
Nicholas R. Monlux
Jonathan S. Moore
Aaron R. Mun
Bruce A. Nakamura*

Kenneth M. Nakasone*
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Gregory M. Sato*
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Zachary K. Shikada
Timothy T. Silvester
Reece Y. Tanaka

April 21, 2025

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: April 22, 2025
TIME: 9:15 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Re: Testimony in Support for Nominee Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of
the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals
GM 790

Dear Committee Members, Chair Rhoads, and Vice Chair Gabbard:

I submit this letter in strong support of Karen T. Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I am the former Attorney General of the State of Hawaii, having served under Governor Neil Abercrombie from 2011 through 2014. I have been a practicing lawyer for the past 45 years, since 1978. I served as the President and Director of the Hawaii State Bar Association, Lawyer Representative for the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Ninth Circuit, Northwest Regional Governor of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, Vice Chair of the Hawaii Supreme Court Rule 19 Committee on Judicial Performance, Chair and Director of the Aloha Tower Development Corporation, and on numerous Bench Bar Committees. I served as a Co-Vice Chair on the recent Task Force on Civil Justice Improvements, which revised the Civil Rules for Hawaii's Circuit Courts. I have appeared in court many, many times, both in Circuit Court and District Court. I

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

April 21, 2025

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have also appeared before the Hawaii Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Ninth Circuit. I have observed many judges and many lawyers.

I strongly recommend that you select Judge Nakasone for this position. I have known Judge Nakasone for approximately twenty (20) years, professionally and socially. I have served on Bar Committees with Judge Nakasone. I have been involved in cases where she was an appellate judge. I have also been involved in cases where she was the trial judge in Circuit Court. When I served as Attorney General, she was the trial judge on a complex case involving the State of Hawaii and various insurance coverage issues. She ruled on several motions before the case settled prior to trial. In all of my dealings with Judge Nakasone, she has always been well prepared, intelligent, articulate and reasonable.

I have also seen Judge Nakasone in social situations, as we are both members of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA). I have attended dinners and gatherings with her on various occasions. In 2009, Judge Nakasone was recognized as one of the Best Lawyers Under 40 by NAPABA.

I have thus observed Judge Nakasone in a variety of settings and find her to be a person who would make an excellent Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. First, Judge Nakasone is and has been an excellent appellate judge, trial court judge, and lawyer. She has handled many difficult and significant cases that have been successfully resolved. She understands law and policy from a practical experiential perspective and is familiar with many legal issues that apply to the State of Hawaii. She has the intelligence, legal knowledge and experience to sit and make rulings as a Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Second, Judge Nakasone has the intelligence, experience and people skills necessary to perform and accomplish the administrative responsibilities associated with the position of Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Third, Judge Nakasone has the temperament, demeanor and calmness needed to succeed as the Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. She is calm, measured, never flustered, even-handed, fair, well balanced and unfailingly polite. She is able to listen to all sides before making a decision in order to obtain all viewpoints and perspectives. She is dispassionate and analytical, but she also understands the human dimensions of the cases that lawyers handle. She is empathic and able to understand the motivations and pressures that underlie the actions of people.

Fourth, Judge Nakasone has an impeccable reputation in the Hawaii legal community for honesty, trustworthiness, character, integrity and citizenship.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

April 21, 2025

Page 3

Judge Nakasone is an asset to the Judiciary in her current position, and would make a further contribution to the judiciary as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. She is hard working, diligent, and unflagging in her enthusiasm and passion to get the right answer and see that justice is done.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. Louie", with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

DAVID M. LOUIE

for

KOBAYASHI SUGITA & GODA, LLP

LAW OFFICE OF HOWARD K. K. LUKE

ATTORNEY AT LAW

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April 21, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: Testimony in Support of GM 790: Gubernatorial Appointee, Judge Karen T. Nakasone, for Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I write in full support of the nomination of Judge Karen T. Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have appeared several times before Judge Nakasone when she was a Circuit Court Judge. From that experience, I can say without reservation that Judge Nakasone is extremely competent, intelligent, and above all, fair to all attorneys and parties who appear before her.

Judge Nakasone's intellect made her a natural choice for transition to the Circuit Court to the Intermediate Court of Appeals. Her character and sound judicial temperament, and her stellar reputation among attorneys now make her an excellent choice to fill the role of Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I respectfully recommend that you confirm the nomination of Judge Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide my letter of support.

Very truly yours,



Howard K. K. Luke

The Honorable Karl Rhoads

Senator, Hawai'i State Senate - Judiciary Committee Chairman

State Capitol Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Regarding - Karen T. Nakasone for Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Intermediate Court of Appeals - In Support

Dear Senator Rhoads:

On behalf of Karen Tooko Nakasone's ancestral Okinawan organization, Yagaji Doshi Kai, I am honored to submit this letter of support regarding the nomination of Karen Tooko Nakasone as the Chief Justice on the Hawaii State Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Our club, Yagaji Doshi Kai, is one of 50-member clubs of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association. All of the members of Yagaji Doshi Kai are descendants of immigrants who arrived on Hawaii shores over 100 years ago from Yagaji Island in Okinawa. We are a small but close-knit club with over 100 families. As such, we have known Karen her entire life and have watched with immense satisfaction in all of her academic success at Hawaii Baptist Academy, Bryn Mawr College, University of Ryukyus in Okinawa and at Boston University's School of Law. We have also beamed with pride in all of her professional accomplishments which included a clerkship with Hawaii Appeals Court Judge Simeon Acoba, her distinguished career as a deputy public defender, as a Judge with the First Circuit Court, and most recently as Associate Judge with the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Yet through all of her accomplishments she has always remained just Karen to all of us, a friend, a family member you could sit with and chat. A dependable member of the family. A committed wife, mother, daughter, cousin, aunty, friend. A person beyond reproach in her passion for Hawaii and her Okinawan culture. An articulate defender of fair justice and life and liberty. I feel, and Yagaji Doshi Kai feels and I am sure that numerous Okinawans in Hawaii feel that Karen Tooko Nakasone is ready to serve as the Intermediate Court of Appeals' Chief Justice.

I applaud you and thank you for your consideration of the nomination of Karen Tooko Nakasone as the Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dale Nakasone", written in dark ink.

Dale M. Nakasone

President, Yagaji Doshi Kai - a member club of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Honolulu Hawaii Branch

(Guam, Hawaii, Japan, Korea)
P.O. Box 553 Honolulu, Hawaii 96809
naacphawaii@gmail.com
(808) 783-8969

LATE

April 21, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Re: Testimony in Support of Karen Nakasone for ICA Chief Judge

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

The NAACP Honolulu Hawaii Branch strongly supports the confirmation of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge for the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA). Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the oldest and largest civil rights organization in the nation fighting for the civil and human rights and equality of all people. The NAACP has worked extensively through legal, political, and social means to address racial discrimination and inequality at the local, state, and national levels.

We are very familiar with the dedicated social justice works of Judge Nakasone across the state and her experience as a past president and director of the JACL Honolulu Chapter. During her time as board president she provided balanced and strong leadership in addressing complex civil rights issues facing our community. We were pleased to collaborate with the JACL under her effective leadership.

Judge Nakasone can be counted on to administer justice fairly and uphold the rights of everyone in accordance with the U.S. Constitution. The NAACP Honolulu Hawaii Branch has the utmost confidence in her ability to serve effectively on and make significant contributions to the Intermediate Court of Appeals. We strongly urge her confirmation as Chief Judge based on her ability to effectively lead a large civil rights organization, coupled with her extensive experience as a Deputy Public Defender, Circuit Court Judge, and Intermediate Court of Appeals Judge.

Sincerely,

Alphonso Braggs, MBA
NAACP Honolulu Hawaii President



April 22, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

LATE

**Re: GM790 Submitting for consideration and confirmation as
Chief Judge of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals,
Gubernatorial Appointee, Karen T. Nakasone, for a term to
expire in 10 years.**

Hearing: Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 9:15 a.m.

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee on Judiciary:

Hawaii Women Lawyers (“**HWL**”) respectfully submits testimony in **support** of the nomination of Karen T. Nakasone to **the Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals** as Chief Judge for a term of 10 years.

HWL is a nonprofit organization with members including approximately 300 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.

Increasing opportunities for qualified women in the Judiciary is extremely important. As highlighted by the World Justice Project, the rule of law depends on having justice delivered by “competent, ethical, and independent representatives and neutrals who reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.” HWL believes that continuing to include qualified women in the Judiciary is vitally important and appreciates the significant strides made in the past several years to improve the diversity of our bench.

Noting that the HSBA has found Karen T. Nakasone to be qualified for the position of Chief Judge of the Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals and for the reasons above, HWL supports the appointment of Karen T. Nakasone.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this nomination.

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/19/2025 1:35:12 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Celeste M. Gonsalves	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I am a Pro Se Litigant with various cases in different courts. I am familiar with the ICA, and my experience with Judge Karen Nakasone has been positive because she has not been biased or unfair to me at all. In fact, she has been kind in offering instructions for me to amend certain filings, upon my request, since the rules did not indicate clearly how I should make corrections. Also, Judge Nakasone's tone in her rulings are kind and straightforward.

Having Judge Karen Nakasone in the ICA Chief Judge position will be a great addition, as it will restore ethics and a fair balance for ALL litigants. The ICA will be able to operate, once again, in a manner that exudes fairness for a just society (a replication of when Justice Lisa Ginoza was in this prestigious position prior).

I am excited for my cases to be actually determined on it Merits, and for ALL the rules to also apply to me. Yes, I have presented unfavorable undertones.

Highly Support and Recommend Judge Karen Nakasone as ICA Chief Judge.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my Support,

Celeste M. Gonsalves



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Attorneys at Law

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Nicholas R. Monlux
Jonathan S. Moore
Aaron R. Mun
Bruce A. Nakamura*

Kenneth M. Nakasone*
Harry Y. Oda
Gregory M. Sato*
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Zachary K. Shikada
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Reece Y. Tanaka

April 20, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Letter of Support for the Nomination of Judge Karen T.
Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of
Appeals

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members:

I strongly support Judge Karen T. Nakasone's nomination as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have been practicing law in Honolulu since 1995, and through the past three decades, have witnessed the rise and blossoming of Judge Nakasone's sterling reputation. First, as a skilled and fearless trial lawyer with the public defenders' office, then onward to the bench – quickly forging a reputation for fairness, absolute preparation, and adherence to the letter of the law. Her appointment to the Intermediate Court of Appeals was broadly supported and celebrated by members of our bar, and now, the proposed selection for her to serve as Chief Judge of the ICA seems a fitting capstone to her long and steady march towards excellence and to the highest levels responsibility in our profession.

However, my keenest observations of Judge Nakasone's high intellect, resourcefulness, integrity, and unquestioned leadership abilities, were gleaned not through any formal legal context, but rather, through her long history of community involvement. For many years, I had the pleasure of serving as Judge Nakasone's aide de camp when she served as the President of the Board of Directors of the Robert Louis Stevenson Middle School Association of Parents & Teachers. Our kids were schoolmates at Stevenson Middle, and we both decided to try to get involved with the school. It was in this context that I really saw - up close – the type of organizational and leadership force of nature, that Judge Nakasone is. She was a

April 20, 2025

Page 2

transformational leader for the Board, systematically re-shaping what had been a disorganized piecemeal collection of parents seeking to help the school, into a formal, organized, cohesive, 501(c)(3)-certified entity that eventually evolved into a true supporting partner for Stevenson Middle.

In that process, Judge Nakasone's lofty vision of what our entity could become, served as the driving inspiration and motivating force for all of us to keep working and persevering through all the obstacles we confronted. She is the type of leader who leads by example; equally willing and able to roll up her sleeves to do the heavy lifting, as well as charting a strategic optimistic future for any entity she is a part of. She is a natural leader that commands everyone's respect; by her words *and* actions. Her dogged spirit and commitment to the health and improvement of any entity she leads is infectious, and rubs off on others. She has high ambitions, and somehow gets those around her to buy in, and in the end, the entity benefits. That, to me, is the best type of leader.

I am proud to call Judge Nakasone a trusted colleague and friend. As a resident of this State, I am extremely pleased and comforted that one of the finest members of our community is now being entrusted to lead this most important institution. I can think of no finer candidate.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Very truly yours,

/s/ *Bruce Nakamura*
BRUCE NAKAMURA

Testimony of Susan L. Arnett
to the Senate Committee on Judiciary

April 22, 2025

RE: GM790. NOMINATION OF KAREN T. NAKASONE AS CHIEF
JUDGE OF THE STATE OF HAWAI'I INTERMEDIATE COURT OF
APPEALS

Senator Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

I write in strong support of the nomination of Karen T. Nakasone as the Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals. I knew Karen first as a State Deputy Public Defender where I supervised her work and respected her as a colleague for many years. She has an outstanding work ethic. She is highly organized and never unprepared. In our felony section, she handled difficult cases at the Circuit Court trial level.

She then excelled in our appellate section where she read every criminal and civil appellate decision handed down by our courts. She is simply unmatched in her ability to analyze caselaw and understand its application to the nuts and bolts of cases in court.

I also worked with Karen on issues in our community prior to her serving on the Bench. As President of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) she encouraged me to join JACL. As a result, I've served on the Board for the past 20 years. As President of an organization made up entirely of volunteers with no staff, it was Karen's organization and leadership skills that re-energized JACL and facilitated our involvement in significant issues in our State.

Karen retains a passion for the law and is keenly aware of the significance of how it is interpreted at both the state and federal level.

I believe Karen will be an outstanding Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals and recommend her wholeheartedly.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this nomination.

April 21, 2025

TO: Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Senate

FROM: Jill L. Nunokawa
Community Member

RE: GM 790 Appointment of Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge,
Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA)

Hearing: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 9:15 a.m.
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Jill Nunokawa and I graduated from the William S. Richardson School of Law in 1988. I have served in many capacities including President of the WSRSL Alumni Association, community activist on Title IX issues, Deputy Public Defender, various state and city positions, as well as being employed by the State of Hawai'i since 1988.

I submit my written testimony in absolute support of ICA Judge Karen T. Nakasone's appointment to serve as the Chief Judge of the ICA. She is/was an exemplary ICA Judge, Circuit Court Judge and practicing attorney in Hawai'i. She is without pretense, arrogance, temper, irrationality, punitiveness, or unscrupulousness. ICA Judge Nakasone originates from our community and has devoted her career to our beloved islands, thus we have all benefited from her inspiring service. She has demonstrated her unwavering commitment to principles over perfunctory appearance, law above luxury, consistency without grandstanding, courage expressed and defined during tumultuous times, and authenticity in authority. She meets and exceeds every category we expect from an ICA Judge including, but not limited to; hard work, honesty, respect, brilliance, responsibility, patience, compassion, keen insight and Aloha.

Additionally, our generation has not witnessed or experienced the kind of dismantling of democratic principles and rule of law happening at the federal level and it is imperative our state select and confirm Judges who perform with proven integrity, transparency, diversity, equity, fairness and inclusion.

I know your choice to consider and confirm will shape Hawai'i for the foreseeable future. As a long-time attorney in our beloved State, your choices matter to me and my loved ones. I encourage you to make your final decision based on meritorious service, commitment to our Constitution, accountability, temperament, proven record of sound judgment and leadership.

In applying these values and principles, Governor Green has selected the best choice to serve as the Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA), Karen T. Nakasone.

She has been without scandal or criticism and has risen within the Judiciary because she is well-respected in our legal community. She has served as an Associate Judge for the ICA for 4.5 years and as a Circuit Court Judge for 9 years prior to her appointment to the ICA and has a total of 13 plus years serving in our Judiciary. Hence, she has a long, accountable and honorable track record reinforcing the public's trust and adherence to democratic principles and the rule of law. Associate Judge Nakasone is independent and has never been beholden to private interests nor has she capitulated to inhumane pressures.

I am confident Associate Judge Nakasone will be a great leader for these uncertain times.

Mahalo for your time, consideration and confirmation on this important selection to lead the State of Hawai'i's ICA and to assure the public that democracy is inclusive of all and the Constitution is the bedrock of our liberty and freedom from tyrannical despots.

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 7:20:51 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Nitta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support.

April 15, 2025

SENT VIA EMAIL

Hawai'i Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 228
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: GM 790 – Testimony In Support of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

I wholeheartedly write in support of the Honorable Associate Judge Karen T. Nakasone's appointment as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. Although I am a licensed attorney in private practice, I submit this testimony in my personal capacity based on familial knowledge.

My paternal family has been active in the Chinatown community over multiple generations¹ and shares a presence in Fort Street Mall since 1995. As a result, I am intimately familiar with many of our beloved former and current family-owned small businesses in the area. Judge Nakasone's parents are the original owners of the Flower Fair floral and lei retail store at 1188 Fort Street Mall from the mid-1980's through 2004. Several family friends and longtime business owners in the area fondly recall Judge Nakasone as an industrious and diligent worker at the family business throughout her formative years. I also understand that Judge Nakasone frequented the other family-owned stores (e.g., the former Logo's Bookstore and Shoe's By Michael) along Fort Street Mall during her leisure time and excelled as a student in the balance of her familial obligations. The Nakasone's operated a community oriented business and was once recognized as the "Most Supportive Small Business" by the Hawaii Pacific College Student Association.

I believe Judge Nakasone's entrepreneurial upbringing shaped her storied record of community leadership and volunteer service in multiple organizations, including the Japanese American Citizens League Honolulu Chapter, Hawaii United Okinawa Association, and Pacific Century Fellows. These experiences demonstrate that Judge Nakasone is well prepared to effectively lead an organization and collaborate with diverse stakeholders as the Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

¹ United Chinese Society of Hawaii, Mun Lun School, and Lum Sai Ho Tong (Lum, Lim, Lam, Lem and Lin (林) surname benevolent society).

Kendrick S. Chang
kchang@wik.com
(808) 627-2758
96825

Finally, Judge Nakasone is also a lifelong martial arts student and volunteer instructor in Kendo and Karate. As a mutual black belt discipline in Tae Kwon Do, I can attest that traditional martial arts is a holistic pursuit that embodies many principles that we expect in a jurist: modesty, courtesy, integrity, self-control, perseverance, and indomitable spirit, etc. I have no doubt that Judge Nakasone follows these principles based on her previous judicial opinions and advocacy work with the Japanese American Citizens League.

Based on the foregoing reasons, I believe Judge Nakasone will serve us well as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals and hope the Senate Judiciary Committee renders a favorable advise and consent recommendation.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kendrick S. Chang', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kendrick S. Chang

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 1:01:51 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Salina Kanai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write this letter in strong support of Judge Nakasone.

I first met Judge Nakasone (of course, Karen, then), when I was a 2L law student interning for the summer at the State Public Defender's Office. I had the opportunity to write the opening brief on an appeal of a trial she had done. I was able to discuss with Karen her trial strategy, appellate issues, and pick her brain about what the appeal should focus on. That was more than 20 years ago, in approximately 2001. I still recall that case because Karen was a respected trial attorney in the office, and even though I was just a law student intern, she treated me with respect and talked to me as if I were an attorney.

A few years later, I did become a trial attorney at the PD's office, and Karen was in the appellate section. I often sought out her advice on cases because her experience was broad and her judgment was always sound. Karen is one of her pursuit of justice. It surprised no one when she became a judge.

Much later in my career, I had the opportunity to appear several times before Judge Nakasone in Circuit Court, including doing a jury trial. I was impressed (but again, not surprised) by her level of preparedness, fairness, impartiality, and commitment to the rule of law. Handling a heavy felony calendar is not an easy thing. Judge Nakasone did it well, and she did so with composure, even-handedness, and respect to all parties. I appreciated that even with a heavy calendar, she did not rush to get through things. She thought deeply about issues. I truly enjoyed appearing before her.

I have been a trial attorney for close to 20 years now, in both state and federal court. I am realizing more and more that one of the most important qualities a judge should have is the working knowledge of how trials are done. This might be even more important for an appellate judge. Judge Nakasone has that trial experience as well as the other qualities that a judge should have – impartiality, a commitment to the rule of law, composure, and integrity, just to name a few.

Thank you for reading my comments.

1130 N. Nimitz Hwy., Suite A-254
Honolulu, HI 96817

April 15, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai`i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Comments Regarding Gubernatorial Nominee Karen T. Nakasone as Chief
Judge of the Hawai`i Intermediate Court of Appeals

Honorable Committee Members:

I write in wholehearted support of Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Hawai`i Intermediate Court of Appeals ("ICA"). I met Karen when she joined the Public Defender's Office in 1996 after a judicial clerkship with now retired Hawai`i Supreme Court Associate Justice Simeon R. Acoba (a known appellate taskmaster). [I retired after 34 years as a Deputy Public Defender, 1989-2023.] After advancing from the Appellate Section through the trial sections (misdemeanor and Felony), Karen returned to the Appellate Section (2004-2011). The Appellate Section consists of five senior appellate attorneys (including myself 2003-2023), so Karen and I worked closely with each other until 2011, when she was appointed as a Circuit Court Judge.

Karen is hardworking and extremely diligent, the classic overachiever. I was impressed when she told me she had been reading all newly-issued appellate cases, both civil and criminal, in the years leading up to her circuit court appointment. That is a huge task, but I believe it helped her hit the ground running when she went to the civil bench as she did not have significant civil experience. Since Karen became an ICA Associate Judge in 2020, I have read many of her opinions. I was impressed by Karen's willingness to research and write a dissenting opinion (i.e., extra and difficult work) when she believed the majority (of the 3-judge panel) incorrectly analyzed and/or decided an issue. Karen obviously has excellent legal research and analysis skills. She is also a practical problem solver. She is smart, creative, and can think out of the box. I appreciate Karen's ability to view the facts of a case in their context, which guards against myopic, impractical decisions.

Karen is quiet and a bit shy until you get to know her. She has a strong sense of morality and ethics and would not be influenced by compassion or passion. Karen is well-organized in both her personal and professional life, a requirement for the Chief Judge position. Her experience as an Associate Judge also gives her great insight into how to keep the ICA's hefty caseload flowing while maintaining quality, well-reasoned decisions. For all the above reasons, I humbly request that you confirm Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge.

Sincerely,

/s/Phyllis J. Hironaka
Phyllis J. Hironaka
Deputy Public Defender, retired

Dr Chadwick Kamei
chadwickkamei@icloud.com

April 18, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: Letter of Support for Judge Karen T. Nakasone (GM790)

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and the Committee on Judiciary,

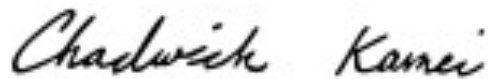
It is an honor and privilege to write this letter in support of Judge Karen Nakasone to the vacancy of the Chief Judge of the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA). I strongly believe that Judge Nakasone is a highly qualified candidate for this position and will be an excellent leader for Hawai'i.

I have worked with Karen for several years as a martial arts teacher and I see her commitment to both her students and the broader community. Her passion and "heart" for the people around her is admirable as she is always helping to make others feel comfortable and included. In martial arts, it's easy to dismiss weaker opponents, however she is inspirational and gives respect to everyone that comes into her dojo regardless of their ranking or skill level. The way I see her treat people, gives me great confidence that her character and ethics are irrefutable to those that she interacts with.

Judge Nakasone is a leader in the truest sense of the word. She will lead by example, listen, collaborate, and make sound decisions to make Hawai'i a better place.

I enthusiastically support Karen T. Nakasone to fill the vacancy for the Chief Judge of the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Sincerely,



Chadwick Kamei, DMA
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Sent via Email

Schlueter, Kwiat & Kennedy

A Limited Liability Law Partnership

Michael H. Schlueter
Jason R. Kwiat
Andrew M. Kennedy
Nicole K. Bowman
Eli N. Bowman

Atrium Court • 75-167 Kalani Street, Suite 201 • Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
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April 18, 2025

Chairman Rhaods, Vice Chair Gabbard, Senators Buenaventura, Awa, Chang
Judiciary Committee
Hawai'i State Senate
Honolulu, HI

RE: GM 790, Justice Karen T. Nakasone

Dear Judiciary Committee:

I write in support of Justice Karen T. Nakasone for Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Justice Nakasone has a reputation as a judge who stands for the rights of the people of Hawai'i. Her opinions are thoughtful and based in sound legal reasoning. She is a good pick for this position.

Regards,
Schlueter, Kwiat & Kennedy LLP



Andrew Kennedy

SCHLUETER, KWIAT & KENNEDY LLP

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Crumpton Collaborative Solutions
Mediation | Arbitration | Conflict Resolution
1251 Heulu Street, #1001 | Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-3087
Cell: 808.284-9209 | Email: crumpton@chjustice.com

April 18, 2025

Hawai'i State Legislature
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: 790 GM Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals, Gubernatorial Appointee, KAREN T. NAKASONE, for a term to expire in 10 years
Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 9:15 a.m.

Dear Committee Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and Committee Members;

As a practicing civil litigation attorney here from 1978 to 2014, as a practicing mediator and arbitrator in civil and public policy cases here since 1985, as a teacher and trainer in negotiations and conflict resolution at Hawai'i Pacific University for over 20 years and in the University of Hawai'i's Executive MBA program in Viet Nam for over 10 years, I can fully affirm from personal knowledge and experience Judge Karen Nakasone's exemplary qualifications, knowledge, experience, education, judgment, common sense, integrity and selfless dedication to understanding and serving the best interests of the Judiciary, the Courts and the community, for her confirmation as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals. Judge Nakason has consistently distinguished herself in both those qualifications and in her devotion to the Judiciary, the Courts, all those they serve, and the community and State, including in her exceptional service as both Circuit Court and Intermediate Court of Appeals Judge, and formerly as Public Defender, throughout the years I have known her. Judge Nakasone will without doubt bring the highest level of service and credit to her leadership of the Intermediate Court of Appeals, the Judiciary and to those they serve. It is an honor and pleasure to support her confirmation as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals without reservations or conditions of any kind. I would be glad to provide additional information and respond to any questions.

Sincerely,



Charles Crumpton
Mediator/Arbitrator
crumpton@chjustice.com
808-284-9209
<https://nadr.org/charles-crumpton>
<https://www.acctm.org/mediators/charles-w-crumpton/>
<https://mediate.com/mediator-profile/Charles-Crumpton/?id=28575>

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/18/2025 2:04:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Seth Colby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Nakasone for this post. I regularly engage with Ms. Nakasone at the Chozen-ji Zen Temple. She is a person of outstanding character, shrewd judgement, and informed care for the welfare of others. The State would be lucky to have her serving in this position.

William Chen
94-1460 Pokeo Street
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

April 18, 2025

Judicial Selection Commission
417 South King Street, Room 206
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Members of the Judicial Selection Commission,

I am writing in support of Karen Nakasone's application for the position of Chief Judge of the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I had the pleasure of serving with Karen on the Roosevelt High School Music Booster Board from 2019 to 2022. While 'mediating' a discussion about whether to fundraise chili tickets or steak plates may seem trivial next to her judicial responsibilities, Karen always brought a rare combination of clarity, fairness, and thoughtful deliberation to every conversation—regardless of the scale of the issue.

Her ability to listen patiently, consider diverse perspectives, and guide groups toward effective and inclusive decisions is one of her defining traits. These qualities, though exhibited in a community setting, mirror the very principles essential to judicial leadership. I have seen firsthand how deeply she cares about the well-being of others, particularly our students, whose music education was disrupted by the transition to remote learning, and our dedicated staff, who faced unprecedented challenges in keeping the program alive during the lockdowns. Karen consistently advocated for solutions that prioritized their needs, and she did so with both compassion and pragmatism.

I am confident that these same values: integrity, empathy, and a deep commitment to justice—guide her work on the bench. Karen possesses the character, experience, and judgment to serve with distinction in this significant role.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my wholehearted endorsement of Karen Nakasone. I cannot think of a more qualified or deserving individual to lead the Intermediate Court of Appeals as Chief Justice.

Sincerely,
William Chen

April 18, 2025
Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Dear Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair Gabbard,

I am writing in support of Karen T. Nakasone's appointment as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. Judge Nakasone served as a Judge in the First Circuit for eight years and the Intermediate Court of Appeals from November 2, 2020. Prior to that, she was a public defender with 15 years of trial and appellate litigation experience. She has done an exemplary job in all roles and is qualified to serve as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have known and worked with Judge Nakasone for over ten years as a member of the Access to Justice Administrative Committee, as well as a former Director of The Mediation Center of the Pacific's board. During that time, I have found her to be extremely intelligent, thoughtful in all decision-making, and consistently calm when under pressure. All desirable qualities of the Chief Judge. Judge Nakasone's commitment to community service combined with her sharp legal mind, makes her a perfect candidate for the appointment as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I strongly encourage you to approve Judge Nakasone's appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracey S. Wiltgen'.

Tracey S. Wiltgen, Esq.

April 18, 2025

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for Karen T. Nakasone's confirmation as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Judge Nakasone's exceptional legal expertise and commitment to justice make her an ideal candidate for this position. Having trained alongside her at Chozen-ji, I've witnessed firsthand her calm strength and centered presence qualities that will serve as a model for all leadership and provide a strong pillar in navigating complex judicial matters.

I respectfully urge the committee to confirm Judge Nakasone's appointment. Her leadership will serve the people of Hawai'i well.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Robbie Sybico

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/18/2025 9:14:39 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Yamagata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee,

I write in *strong support* of the appointment of Judge Karen T. Nakasone to serve as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I had the honor of serving as Judge Nakasone's judicial assistant when she was in Circuit Court, and I witnessed firsthand the qualities that make her exceptionally well-suited for this important leadership role.

Judge Nakasone's integrity is beyond reproach. She is someone you can trust implicitly—not only to follow the law but to lead with fairness, thoughtfulness, and unwavering dedication to justice. Her decisions are carefully considered and grounded in a deep respect for the law and the people it serves.

In my observation, she was an incredibly diligent and detail-oriented jurist. Whether working on complex legal issues or managing the day-to-day functions of her courtroom, she brought her full attention and care to everything she did. You can count on her to approach each challenge with excellence, humility, and purpose.

Judge Nakasone also leads with kindness and compassion. She treated her staff with respect and genuine warmth, and I always felt supported and valued working with her. At the same time, she earned the deep respect of the attorneys who appeared before her because of her professionalism, fairness, and sharp legal mind.

Perhaps what stands out most is that she embodies the rare combination of strong leadership and a good heart. She holds herself to the highest standards while making those around her feel seen, heard, and empowered to do their best work.

Judge Nakasone's commitment to public service and her deep ties to the community make her the kind of leader our judiciary needs—one who understands not only the letter of the law but its spirit.

I can say without hesitation that she would be an outstanding Chief Judge. Her steady, principled leadership would serve the Intermediate Court of Appeals—and the people of Hawai'i—with distinction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support.

With gratitude,
Jamie Yamagata

Connie Chun

95-189 Alaalaa Loop, Mililani, Hawaii 96789 | 808-781-9658 | conniechun@hawaii.rr.com

April 18, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

It gives me great pleasure to submit this message of recommendation on behalf of Ms. Karen Nakasone who is under consideration as a Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals. I have known Karen for several years because her daughters were participants in the Hawaii United Okinawa Association's Cultural Day Camp for Children (CDC), as campers and as Junior Leaders. As a Co-Director of this cultural event, I've had opportunity to meet and interact with many young families from the Okinawan community. It's always interesting to meet folks from all walks of life, even judges! Of course, I never knew of Karen prominence in the Judiciary because she's always so humble and ordinary, she simply showed up as a mother. Her awareness of and respect for our rich and vibrant *Shimanchu* culture is probably what motivates her to impart these values onto her children as they have participated in this cultural camp for many years. Karen's karate sensei conducted classes at CDC and Karen kindly found the time to assist him for a few days; for that we were quite grateful!

I have also met her parents: Dad is a neighbor islander and Mom is from Okinawa. Is it any wonder where Karen's strong values and principles stem from? If you were to judge a person's character based on his/her parents and children, certainly Karen would rank very highly. Her family is undoubtedly very proud of her but they all remain very grounded and so approachable. I always enjoy sharing stories with the Nakasones! To me, Karen is a person of high standards and moral character. This kind of greatness doesn't just happen and is not present in all families. Through my association with Karen's parents and children, I can see where her character has been nurtured and through the years passed on to the next generations. I can see that Karen has somehow and very intuitively accepted this as her own *sukubun* or *kuleana*.

Karen is surely a positive role model to others, she is probably an inspirational leader in her courtroom. She is able to take on challenges quietly but with courage and confidence and great humility. I'll always remember that moment in her court when the convicted felon wished to express his regrets to his victim's family: all of the parents had suffered unspeakable tragedy as one son was shot and killed and the other son was to begin a sentence for his crime. Because the adjoining courtroom was unavailable, Karen allowed this moment of *hooponopono* to take place on the spot. Her compassion and trust resulted in a sharing that would probably never ever happen again. I cried when I watched this news clip. My heart filled with pride and gratitude for this woman who could feel deeply for the two broken families.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of my message.

Yutasarugutu unigeesabira,

Connie Arakaki Chun

Connie Arakaki Chun

April 18, 2025

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of the Consideration and Confirmation of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone

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

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I am currently a third-year law student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, William S. Richardson School of Law. During my second year, I had the privilege of serving as a judicial extern to Judge Nakasone. As a student still developing my understanding of the legal profession and the role of the judiciary, externing in her chambers was one of the most formative experiences I have had in law school.

Judge Nakasone is the embodiment of judicial temperament. She is thoughtful, measured, and fair in her approach to the law. She leads with humility, integrity, and a deep respect for the parties and the process. Observing her deliberations and learning from her writing taught me the importance of clarity, precision, and compassion in judicial decision-making.

As the first woman mentor I have had in the legal field, Judge Nakasone has had a significant impact on me. She was generous with her time and wisdom, and she made space for me to ask questions, contribute, and grow in confidence. Her example continues to shape the lawyer I aspire to be.

I have no doubt that Judge Nakasone will serve the ICA with distinction and strong leadership as Chief Judge. I wholeheartedly support her confirmation and urge the Senate to do the same.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Layce Yamauchi', with a stylized, cursive script.

Layce Yamauchi

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/19/2025 7:16:43 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Hu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my comments in support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge of the State of Hawai‘i Intermediate Court of Appeals (“ICA”).

I am an attorney licensed in the State of Hawai‘i. I served as a student extern and later as a full-time law clerk for Judge Nakasone when she served at the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai‘i. Based on my personal experience and observations, I found her to be intelligent, fair & compassionate, hard-working, and dedicated to serving the people of Hawai‘i.

During my time with Judge Nakasone, she always worked diligently to prepare for her case-calendar, and sometimes even late into the evening. Again, I have personally witnessed the great level of thought and care she gives in preparing for her rulings, both oral and written. I am confident that she will continue to fulfill her responsibilities and duties to the highest level of standards as Chief Judge of the ICA.

In addition to her first-class work ethic, her dedication to public service is something that stood out in my mind. Even with her busy work schedule and two young children (at the time), I recall that she still took time to organize and participate in various community events. She was a positive role model who inspired me to apply and serve on the Young Lawyers Division board. I hope future law students and young attorneys will have the same opportunity to learn from her.

I wholeheartedly support the selection of Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the ICA. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Hu

jeffreyhu808@gmail.com

April 19, 2025

Committee on Judiciary
State of Hawai'i Senate
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: In VERY STRONG SUPPORT of Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals

Dear Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I write to express my very strong and enthusiastic support for Karen T. Nakasone to serve as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I have known Judge Nakasone for 38 years, since we were both in high school and we both became lawyers. Since I have known her, she has always been someone who wants to contribute and to help ensure justice in our society—and to inspire others in doing so.

Throughout her career as a public defender, a trial court judge, and an appellate judge, Judge Nakasone has acted independently, with fairness and integrity, and with her commitment to public service and the rule of law as her highest priorities. She has extensive knowledge and proficiency from her years in practice and on the bench. Yet she is humble and treats everyone with respect.

In addition, Judge Nakasone has excellent leadership and organizational skills and is able to effectively collaborate and build consensus when needed. Through her diligence and conscientiousness, she has shown an ability to efficiently manage and clear a high case volume. Due to her calm demeanor both in and out of the courtroom, among other things, she is able to attract and retain a talented staff who support her to be extremely productive.

I am confident that Judge Nakasone would continue to excel and inspire as Chief Judge of the ICA in order to serve the people of Hawai'i. Thank you for your consideration of her for this position.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Connie Y. Chang', with a stylized, flowing script.

Connie Y. Chang

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/19/2025 6:01:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Kawano-Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Selection Committee,

I am writing to strongly recommend Judge Karen Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge of the Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I have known Karen Nakasone for about 10 years. She has always been someone I have appreciated for her forthright, caring demeanor and her ability to process situations with a combination of objective clarity and underlying compassion. When decisions need to be made, Karen always asks astute questions, listens carefully to responses, and provides clear, definitive assessments. Most importantly, I trust Judge Nakasone implicitly.

If appointed, I am confident that Judge Karen Nakasone will serve our community with deep, unwavering commitment and heart. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Cathy Kawano-Ching

April 19, 2025

To: The Senate Committee on Judiciary
Chair, Senator Karl Rhoads
Vice-Chair Mike Gabbard
Hearing: On Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 9:15 am, in Conference Room 225, State Capitol

Submitted by: Josephine L. Chang

Position: In support of the confirmation of Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals for a term of 10 years

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

I am writing in support of the confirmation of Karen T. Nakasone, who has been appointed by Governor Josh Green as the Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I have known Judge Nakasone for over 25 years as a colleague and as a friend, and found her to be consistently a person of outstanding character, honest and unfailingly ethical, deeply responsible, and of the highest integrity. She is warm, caring, and supportive to her friends and family, with a big heart and compassion for people from all walks of life. She has long been committed to doing her best in service of the public interest for the people of Hawaii, including her current service on the ICA.

In my view, there is no doubt that Judge Nakasone is highly qualified to serve as Chief Judge for the ICA with her excellent legal abilities and body of experience in trial work as a public defender and as a lower court judge, and in appellate work from serving as a law clerk at the ICA, an appellate public defender, and as a judge for the ICA. Judge Nakasone is not only experienced in the appellate practice and judicial determinations in appellate law, but also in the administrative duties and challenges of the ICA, and the need to work collegially with other judges in the management of its deliberational processes.

Judge Nakasone would bring an unfailing work ethic, a fair mind, and a steady and measured judicial temperament that would serve the Court well. She is a hard worker with great intellectual capacity for consideration of the breadth of Hawai'i law, including detailed and rigorous research and varied factual information, the language of the law, its interpretations, and issues pertaining to the law. She also works well with others with patience, respect, calm and tact, and with a quiet confidence that lends itself to effective guidance and leadership.

I believe the Judiciary and Hawaii are fortunate that Judge Nakasone is willing to commit herself to service as Chief Judge of the ICA. I strongly and unreservedly recommend Judge Karen T. Nakasone to you and urge you all to confirm Judge Nakasone as Chief Judge of the ICA.

Respectfully,
Josephine L. Chang
Retired Attorney-at-Law
Ph. (808) 383-2111

Hiroyuki Shayne Takei

1005 Waieli Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96821
Mobile: (347) 968-9737
hirotakei@gmail.com

April 19, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 228
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Subject: Support for Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Justice of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals

Dear Chair Roads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members,

My name is Hiro Takei, and I currently serve as a Deputy Attorney General for the State of Hawaii in the Labor Law Division. I write in my individual capacity to express my wholehearted support for Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

While I have never appeared before her in her role as a judge, I have known Karen for many years as my karate instructor at Seibukan Karate Dojo, where she holds the rank of black belt. Beyond her excellence in martial arts, Karen embodies the values of discipline, humility, and service. Her quiet leadership, steady presence, and deep commitment to community have consistently inspired those around her.

Karen's integrity is unwavering. She is intelligent, calm, respectful, and kind—qualities that naturally draw people to her and make her an effective leader and mentor. She has long been involved in preserving and promoting Okinawan culture, organizing karate demonstrations and helping our dojo rebuild after losing its location during the pandemic. She does this not for recognition, but out of a deep sense of responsibility to her community.

Karen is also deeply supportive of those around her. When I made the difficult decision to leave the restaurant industry and pursue a career in law, Karen was one of the first to encourage me. She connected me with her former law clerk, cheered me on, and gave me the confidence to move forward. That kind of genuine support is rare—and deeply meaningful.

Despite the demands of her judicial role, Karen remains grounded. She never boasts of her position, and many of us in the dojo only learned of her judgeship long after knowing her. She continues to lead with humility, grace, and balance—qualities further exemplified in her dedication to meditation and well-being. Karen Nakasone leads by example. She is steady, capable, and compassionate. I have no doubt that she will bring the same excellence, fairness, and civility to the Intermediate Court of Appeals as she has to every area of her life.

Thank you for considering my strong endorsement of Karen Nakasone for this important position.

Sincerely,

/s/ Hiroyuki S. Takei

Friday, April 18, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: Letter of Support for the Nomination of Judge Karen T. Nakasone to the Seat of Chief
Justice of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals (GM790)

My name is Andrew Ching, and I am writing to express my support for Judge Karen T. Nakasone's appointment as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have known Karen for the past five years as a sensei at our dojo. During this time, I have come to recognize her as a humble, strong, and compassionate leader. Karen has devoted many years to her training and is a dedicated practitioner of martial arts, rarely missing a class. The principles of martial arts permeate every aspect of her life. She is not afraid to work hard and is fully committed to achieving her goals. When she is not training, I often find Karen pulling weeds around the dojo, which I believe is a true testament to her humility.

Karen regularly speaks with young leaders, sharing her experiences and insights. I recall listening to her stories and wondering how she can handle all of the things she has to face. But no matter how difficult a case may be or how heavy the burdens she carries, Karen always powers through. When she speaks about her job, I can tell that she loves and cares about what she does. She often references the Aloha Spirit Law, and how she uses it as a reminder to be compassionate to the people she serves and works with. She will always make time to connect with young people like us, encouraging us to pursue ambitious goals. I am confident that she truly cares about the future of Hawai'i and its people.

Karen is an exceptional individual. I know that she will fulfill her responsibilities with fairness and diligence. I hold Karen Nakasone in the highest esteem and would like to offer my strongest recommendation for her.

Mahalo,
Andrew Ching
Andrew Ching

April 19, 2025

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
Re: Support of Karen Nakasone

Dear Senators,

I am writing to support the appointment of Karen Nakasone to the position of Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have known Ms. Nakasone since the early 1970's when my family moved to Honolulu. She has always been polite and respectful of others. She trained in Kendo, a traditional Japanese martial art, which teaches discipline, alertness, courage and foresight, as well as physical fitness. She holds a second-degree Dan (black belt).

Today she trains in Zen at a Temple in Honolulu. She also teaches Okinawan Karate there. These significant cultural practices were brought to Hawaii by early immigrants, and should be perpetuated to the future generations so that they may grow into productive and healthy members of the society. They vitalize our spirits so that we are able to function appropriately in the most challenging of situations.

Ms. Nakasone is diligent with her tasks, completely trustworthy and honorable. She possesses the necessary qualities to be successful in such a demanding position as the Chief Judge. I am very happy to support her appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dick Y. Teshima', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Dick Y. Teshima, MPH, MT(ASCP)
Retired Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Medical Technology, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, John A. Burns School of Medicine

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/19/2025 5:16:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Casey Hearl	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I had the pleasure of externing with Judge Nakasone during my final semester of law school in the spring of 2024. I wanted to extern with Judge Nakasone, specifically, because a handful of law school faculty expressed that she was an excellent judge and a dedicated and passionate mentor for law students. I can attest that I found this to be true, as well. Judge Nakasone has a wealth of knowledge. She is incredibly passionate about justice and serving the people of Hawaii. She has a brilliant mind and is an astute decision-maker. Yet, she is also very humble. Likewise, her incredible work ethic cannot go unnoticed.

During my externship, I wrote a brief, and she, as well as her incredible law clerks, supported and guided me from start to finish. She was always open to answering my questions and giving feedback. My writing and critical thinking skills improved under her guidance. Aside from being an excellent judge and mentor, she is also a very kind individual. Despite her busy schedule, she always took the time to "talk story" with me. She inquired into my life and asked questions about my future goals. I appreciated her curiosity to learn about me and her willingness to offer her experiences working in Hawaii's legal community. Additionally, I greatly admired how she treated her staff and created a welcoming work environment. Her law clerks and judicial assistant always spoke highly of her--a testament to her wonderful leadership skills. I left the externship with nothing short of an ideal experience.

I am in full support of her confirmation as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. Mahalo for considering my testimony.

- Casey Hearl

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 12:00:14 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Nakasone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of Karen Nakasone's nomination as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

In addition to Karen's professional experience that makes her an ideal nominee, her character as a person who cares for her family, her colleagues, her heritage, and her community and the people of Hawaii is what makes her the natural selection for this appointment. Her dedication and balanced approach to the role of Chief Judge will be a great benefit to our State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this nomination.

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 7:18:48 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel M. Gluck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong support of Judge Nakasone's appointment as Chief Judge of the ICA. In addition to her extensive experience as a Public Defender, a Circuit Court Judge, and an Associate Judge of the ICA - and in addition to her being incredibly smart, hardworking, dedicated to public service, and committed to civil rights - she is a wonderful and kind person.

I'm very grateful to have had the opportunity to get Judge Nakasone's advice over the years on everything from legal careers to public schools: she has been (and continues to be) a mentor and a friend, and will be a tremendous asset to the Judiciary in her new leadership role on the ICA; she's also a big supporter of DOE schools, and has been a valuable resource for my family and me as we have raised our kids.

I am genuinely delighted for Judge Nakasone to have the opportunity to serve in this new role, where I have no doubt she will excel. I wholeheartedly support her appointment.

April 22, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE: GM790 Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals, Gubernatorial Appointee, KAREN T. NAKASONE, for a term to expire in 10 years.

DATE: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 9:15 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Chair Rhoads and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I am a licensed attorney in the State of Hawai'i with over twenty-five years of experience practicing law in the Hawaii. I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of Karen T. Nakasone's nomination as Chief Judge for the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals. I have known Karen for over twenty years in her career as an attorney, judge, and active member of the community.

I had the pleasure of first getting to know Karen in 2001 when she joined the Board of Directors of the Honolulu Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. The JACL is a national civil rights organization whose mission is to uphold human and civil rights. Karen quickly rose in leadership positions, serving as Chapter President from 2004 to 2006. She consistently stood up for the rights of minorities and the poor; advocated for the fair treatment of immigrants; and promoted gender equity in the workplace. Karen tirelessly served the Honolulu JACL Chapter with great dedication, humility and competence.

Since then, I have watched with admiration the development and refinement of Karen's legal career and profession. In her fifteen years at the Public Defender's office, Karen has ensured that the legal rights of those who cannot afford a private attorney were upheld. She litigated over 100 trials in district, circuit and family court, and represented hundreds of indigent clients before parole boards as well as the appellate courts. I was struck by Karen's strong, unwavering dedication for fairness and equality in society.

Between 2011-2020, Karen served as Trial Judge for the First Circuit Court where she presided over both criminal and civil matters. During nine years on the trial bench, Karen has adjudicated thousands of cases on a wide range of legal and societal issues. She also was a Substitute Associate Judge for the Hawai'i Supreme Court, and Substitute Associate Judge for the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
April 22, 2025
Page 2

Currently, Karen is an Associate Judge for the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals. For the past five years, Karen decided appeals from district, circuit and family courts, statewide. She is intimately aware of and familiar with the workings of the ICA, including its case load, operations, demands and challenges. Karen would be ideal in managing the activities of the court, and to continue to work collaboratively with the judges she currently serves with.

Judge Nakasone's collective legal and life experiences, coupled her current working knowledge and experience on the ICA, will enable her to serve well as Chief Judge. I urge your support for Karen Nakasone's appointment as Chief Judge for the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM M. KANEKO
Partner

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF KAREN T. NAKASONE

FOR CHIEF JUDGE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII INTERMEDIATE COURT OF APPEALS

I am writing in strong support of Karen T. Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals. I have known Karen for over 30 years and in that time, I have always known her to be extremely diligent and hard-working, as well as a person of great integrity with a heart for service. Karen's strong character and work-ethic, combined with her experience as a Deputy Public Defender and as a judge in both the First Circuit Court and the Intermediate Court of Appeals, makes me confident that she would be an exceptional Chief Judge. The people of Hawaii would be incredibly fortunate to have Karen serve in this capacity.

I first met Karen at the Boston University School of Law in 1993, when we were both law school students. It was readily apparent that Karen was very serious about her career in law. She was always prepared for class and studied extremely hard. She was also passionate about serving her community and took leadership positions in the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association. Inspired by the character Atticus Finch (*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee), she aspired to be a public defender to ensure everyone had access to representation, uphold our Constitution and better our community. As a law student one year behind her, I greatly admired her discipline, passion and how hard she worked to achieve her goals.

True to form, Karen did not waiver from her commitment, and became a Deputy Public Defender after graduating law school. The diligence, hard work, and integrity that Karen regularly displayed in law school was also clear during her time as a Deputy Public Defender and then later as a judge in both the First Circuit and the Intermediate Court of Appeals. When she first joined the Circuit Court, she started as a Civil Trial judge. Since most of her experience up to that point was in criminal law, she worked extra hard to make sure she was well-versed in civil law. I was very much in awe of the tremendous amount of preparation that Karen undertook to get ready for each day on the bench. Her top priority was always ensuring that she was serving the people of Hawaii to the best of her ability.

Karen's strong work ethic and appreciation for Hawaii can be directly traced to her parents. They owned a floral shop in downtown Honolulu and as small business owners, they worked very hard and made many sacrifices for Karen and her sister. During high school and even into the early part of her law career, Karen would often assist them with the family business and was able to see first-hand how hard they worked and their connection to the community. Karen would often speak of her great appreciation and admiration for everything her parents did. It is clear that she works hard every day to uphold these values that she was raised with and are a part of who she is.

Karen has always been involved in serving the community throughout all the years I have known her, and cares deeply about Hawaii. Whether through school organizations, serving and teaching at cultural organizations and her dojo, or her involvement in many professional organizations, she is always working to ensure the well-being of Hawaii and its people. She grew up here, raised her children here, and is vested in Hawaii's future. She will always do her best to uphold Hawaii's laws and constitution.

Hawaii would benefit greatly from having Karen T. Nakasone serve as Chief Judge. From her time as a law student to her current role as an Associate Judge at the Intermediate Court of Appeals, Karen's diligence, integrity, and care for her community has remained steadfast. The breadth and depth of her knowledge and strong foundation from her past judicial experience also ensure that she would be an exceptional Associate Justice. It is for these reasons that I wholeheartedly support Karen T. Nakasone for Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 11:06:45 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lane Kaiwi Opulauoho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee members Chang, San Buenaventura and Awa:

It is with great respect that I write in full support of the appointment of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone to serve as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

As a former law clerk to Judge Nakasone, I know firsthand Judge's commitment to the pursuit of justice, the honor of the bench, and the rule of law. Seeing her strong and tireless work ethic, balanced with her deep and abiding love of her family, friends and community, has provided me a great role model for my own possible future endeavors.

I believe that this appointment will fit her strengths well; her collegial nature, management skills, and her ability to work well with her colleagues, combined within this new and exciting role at the court she has been serving for the last five years. I look forward to the work that Judge Nakasone, and the current ICA will do going forward.

I offer my sincere congratulations to Judge Nakasone, and thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on her behalf.

With warm regards,

Lane Kaiwi Opulauoho

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 1:10:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Judicial Committee,**I humbly submit my full support for Ms. Karen Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.**

Ms. Nakasone was a staunch supporter of Roosevelt High School. As Vice President of our Music Boosters, her dedication and commitment was instrumental in organizing fundraising events and increasing our membership, which was not easy especially after returning from the COVID 19 epidemic. Her meticulous planning and organization as part of the Project Graduation Committee for the Class of 2022, ensured a safe and memorable celebration for our graduates. This willingness to dedicate her time and effort to our students reflects the thoroughness and commitment to the well-being of others that I believe are crucial for a Chief Judge.

Ms. Nakasone is a humble servant leader. I had no idea she was a Circuit Court judge when I first met her. I was informed by my band director of her important position when we had a conversation because I was impressed with her willingness to help our Music Boosters and school. Her humility, even while holding a significant judicial role, speaks volumes about her character and her focus on service rather than status.

I believe Ms. Nakasone has the characteristics to be fair, just and thorough, which are important "must haves" as Chief Judge of the Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I kindly ask for your consideration in confirming Ms. Karen Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Please feel free to contact me at (808)307-0590 if you have any questions.

Mahalo,**Sean Wong****Principal****Roosevelt High School**

April 20, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Karl Rhoads and members of the committee:

I am writing this letter in support of the nomination and confirmation of Associate Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge for the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I believe Judge Nakasone possesses the characteristics necessary to be an excellent Chief Judge.

I have been a law clerk for Judge Nakasone since 2022. Throughout my clerkship, I have gotten to know Judge Nakasone on a professional and personal basis. On a professional basis, Judge Nakasone is fair, reasonable, and takes tremendous pride in her work. Judge Nakasone is an inspiration through her passion for the law, commitment to the court, and integrity. Despite Judge Nakasone's experience as a trial judge, appellate judge, and successful public defender, Judge Nakasone is always willing to learn and listen with an open mind.

On a personal basis, Judge Nakasone is kind, compassionate, patient, family-oriented, and always willing to lend a helping hand. As a public-school graduate and first-generation law school graduate myself, I also highly admire Judge Nakasone's dedication and support for public-school education and students. Despite Judge Nakasone's successful legal career, Judge Nakasone continued to proudly send her daughters to public school, where her daughters graduated from. Judge Nakasone continues to offer her mentorship to those starting their legal career in Hawai'i, is always willing to answer questions, and teach those around her. She is truly an inspiration to many, and continues to be a leader to those around her.

I firmly believe that Judge Nakasone possesses the characteristics necessary to be Chief Judge for the Intermediate Court of Appeals, and will not only serve the Hawai'i community well, but will do so with integrity and humility. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Judge Nakasone's nomination and the consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Saige Miller', with a stylized, cursive script.

Saige Miller

April 20, 2025

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FR: Joyce K. Matsumori-Hoshijo
Attorney at Law

RE: GM 790—Testimony in Support of the Nomination of Karen T.
Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate
Court of Appeals
Hearing date and time: Monday, April 22, 2025 @ 9:15 AM

I am writing to express my strong support for the nomination of Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I have known Karen Nakasone since 1996 when she began working with the Office of the Public Defender. At that time, I was a senior staff attorney in the appellate division of the office. Based on my knowledge of and familiarity with Judge Nakasone's professional development, abilities, and character over these past decades, I believe that she possesses the key attributes which will make her an excellent Chief Judge of the ICA.

Through Judge Nakasone's extensive experience as a litigator and Circuit Court judge, she has developed an in-depth understanding of trial court practice, procedure, and applicable law in both civil and criminal cases. Her experience as an Intermediate Court judge, authoring numerous decisions and being immersed in the appellate court process, has provided her with the knowledge and ability to effectively lead the ICA as Chief Judge.

In addition to her legal abilities and accomplishments, Judge Nakasone has contributed her time and leadership to many community and legal organizations. She is a wonderful mentor and understands the importance of "giving back" to her community.

On a personal level, I have always known Judge Nakasone to be a truly compassionate, fair, and even-tempered person. She is collegial and well-

liked by her peers. Judge Nakasone treats everyone with respect and holds herself to the highest ethical standards.

I have the utmost confidence that Judge Nakasone has the moral character and intellectual strength to serve as the Chief Judge of the ICA with honor.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter of support.

SUSAN M. ICHINOSE

Attorney at Law

April 20, 2025

The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

**Re: GM790 relating to the Nomination of The Honorable Karen T. Nakasone
As Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals**

Hearing Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025
Time: 9:15 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Senator Rhoads, Senator Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

This testimony is being submitted for your consideration and confirmation of the nomination of The Honorable KAREN T. NAKASONE as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have known Judge Nakasone for approximately 15 years---initially, in my capacity as Vice Chair (2010-2011) and Chair (2011-2012) of the Judicial Selection Commission, and subsequently in my capacity as a commercial litigator, arbitrator, and mediator in State and Federal Courts in Hawai`i. We first met when she came before the Commission as an applicant for an open seat on the First Circuit Court bench after enjoying a successful career as a criminal trial and appellate lawyer for the Office of the Public Defender.

I recall reviewing appellate briefs she submitted to Commission, and being impressed by her scholarship, her intellectual *gravitas*, and her public-spirited advocacy. She earned her spot on the Commission's list of candidates for the bench; and was selected for a judgeship on the First Circuit bench by the Governor.

Since then, I have transitioned my law practice from litigation to neutral work as an arbitrator, mediator, and neutral fact-finder specializing in the labor and employment sector. Judge Nakasone subsequently appointed me as a commercial mediator in two commercial litigation cases---one in 2014, and another in 2015.

P. O. Box	Honolulu, HI	Phone	E-Mail
240749	96824-0749	808.382-8888	smiaalaw@gmail.com

The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Page 2

Each involved a particularly intransigent party who refused to mediate, and who took the case through the system, ending with Supreme Court decisions against them. Despite their intransigence, Judge Nakasone demonstrated, in my opinion, an excellent judicial temperament, *i.e.*, a general attitude towards the law and litigants that encompasses qualities like patience, impartiality, courtesy, and decisiveness.

Judge Nakasone, in short, has impressed me with her public spirit, her judicial acumen, her legal scholarship and writing, and her fairness. In my experience she has treated all she encounters with courtesy and respect. She possesses a brilliant legal mind; but she also has the common touch.

She has been a great asset to the appellate bench. I urge you to advance her nomination as Chief Judge of the ICA to the Senate and confirm her. You may rest assured that she will exceed her current role as a consummate jurist, and prove to be a superior leader of the Court.

Mahalo, me ke Aloha Pumehana,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maunaloa", written in a cursive style.

Date: April 19, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: GM790, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals as Chief Judge, Gubernatorial Appointee, Karen T. Nakasone

Hearing: Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 9:15 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225
415 South Beretania Street

It is my privilege to write this testimony in support of the confirmation to the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals as Chief Judge, Gubernatorial Appointee, Associate Judge Karen T. Nakasone. I worked with Associate Judge Nakasone for approximately five (5) years when she served as a Deputy Public Defender for the State Office of the Public Defender. As a Deputy Public Defender, I appeared before her at the Circuit Court of the First Circuit for approximately four (4) years when she served as a Circuit Court Judge.

Associate Judge Nakasone possesses an exceptional legal mind with an extensive knowledge of criminal and civil law. When I began working at the State Public Defender's Office, she was already serving in the Appellate Division. She was a diligent and meticulous worker. She wrote countless appellate briefs and successfully argued many cases before the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals and the State of Hawaii Supreme Court.

As a new Deputy Public Defender in the Appellate Division, I sought advice and assistance from her in writing appellate briefs. She freely shared her knowledge with me as well as others. She was one of the leaders of our office's weekly brainstorming session in which she helped attorneys analyze legal issues in preparing cases for jury trial. Most of the time, during these brainstorming sessions, she would be the only representative from the Appellate Division. Her knowledge of appellate law was invaluable to the attorneys in attendance as her expertise greatly enhanced our trial advocacy skills. By the time I moved to the District and Family Court Division, she was giving me advice and assistance in preparing my cases for trial.

Appearing before her court at the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, then Judge Nakasone displayed the same diligence and attention to detail I witnessed from her at the State Public Defender's Office. She was thoughtful in her rulings and was not afraid to make tough decisions. She was fair and reasonable to all parties involved in a case. She did not favor one side over the other. She expected attorneys that appeared before her to be prepared. She showed compassion for defendants but held them accountable for their actions when necessary. She did not presume every defendant that appeared before her was guilty of the crime for which he or she had been charged. She treated everyone with dignity and respect regardless of background or status.

I strongly support the confirmation of Gubernatorial Appointee Associate Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge to the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals. Her confirmation will be a positive reflection on the State of Hawaii. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony.

Respectfully,

/S/OKECHUKWU AMADI

Okechukwu “Okie” Amadi
Deputy Public Defender
State of Hawaii

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 6:27:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ja Moon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It Concerns, I wholeheartedly endorse Karen Nakasone to the position of Chief Judge of the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have known Karen for over thirty years since law school. Throughout this time, she has consistently exhibited the due diligence, hard work ethics, compassion and excellent judgement that I would want in a leader of the judiciary. Her respect for the practice of law is profound but just as much, her respect and care for her family, friends and community will guide her management and pronouncements of the court.

This court and the people of Hawai'i can only benefit from Karen's patience, guidance, humanity and reverence for the law. I highly support her appointment.

Ja Moon

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 6:43:13 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea Okamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Chelsea Okamoto and I am currently a Deputy Attorney General in the Criminal Justice Division. I write in support of the nomination of Honorable Karen Nakasone to serve as Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I was formerly a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney with the City and County of Honolulu's Office of the Prosecuting Attorney. I was assigned to Judge Nakasone's courtroom, handling a variety of felony cases on her calendar. While appearing in her courtroom, I found her to be meticulously careful with the record, with an eye towards potential appeals. This was not an easy feat when she was carrying a full criminal calendar. Even in the heat of trial, she exercised admirable judicial temperament and was consistently thoughtful in her decisions.

Outside of the courtroom, I valued her as an outstanding example of a mother in this profession. Her active involvement in the Japanese American community, while juggling the demands of motherhood and work is nothing short of impressive.

I lend my full support towards Judge Nakasone's nomination. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit my testimony in support.

Chelsea Okamoto

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 7:33:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Minda Yamaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of GM 790: Gubernatorial Appointee, Judge Karen T. Nakasone for Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals. I met Judge Nakasone when we both worked at the State of Hawai'i Public Defender Office. I began my legal career there as she ended her time as a practitioner. Our time together overlapped only for about a year while she was in appellate litigation and after which she would be appointed as Circuit Court Judge. At the public defender's office, she was known for being super smart. While that could be intimidating for an attorney starting their career, Karen's willingness to make time to answer even basic questions alleviated those fears. Her natural mentoring nature helped soften initial impressions of Karen which tend to be that she is stern. Indeed, as I have gotten to know her over the years, including through outside the courtroom shared time, I have learned this stern impression has some merit because she does take life seriously. She is careful in her actions and strives for betterment in so many facets – from work, to health, to mentoring the next generation, in parenting, and being a good steward for our community. But I have also come to learn that she enjoys laughing, talking pidgin when reminiscing about her childhood, and finding joy in what life has to offer. All of which makes Judge Nakasone an incredible jurist and leader. I believe she is eminently suited for the Chief Judge position.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely, Minda Yamaga

April 20, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Conference Room 225
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

Please find this letter in strong support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone for the Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I have known her for over twenty years, first as a deputy public defender. As a young deputy prosecutor, I remember being exposed to a wide range of defense attorneys at Circuit Court. Some have colorful personalities; some have big egos. Then-deputy public defender Karen Nakasone stood out because she was always calm, professional, and composed, even in the heat of trial.

Those qualities serve her well on the bench. I appeared before her when she was a trial judge. She was prepared for all hearings, fair to both sides, and her rulings are well reasoned. As a current appellate judge, her opinions are concise and straightforward. I have no doubt Judge Nakasone has the respect of her peers and the ability to lead the ICA.

What is most impressive is the fact that she is well grounded and approachable. Whether it is due to her Zen training or her upbringing, it is significant to note that she sees value in all things, big and small. Her humility is an invaluable contribution to the judiciary and the community overall. Please confirm Judge Nakasone's nomination.

Sincerely,

/s/ Adrian Dhakhwa

April 20, 2025

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

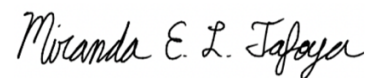
My name is Miranda Tafoya, and I submit this testimony in strong support of the appointment and confirmation of Karen T. Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge of the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I have been a law clerk for Judge Nakasone at the ICA for the past year and a half. I was especially interested in clerking for Judge Nakasone because of her public service background and her dedication to civil rights. As one of her law clerks, I witness every day her commitment to fairness and justice. I know Judge Nakasone to be a diligent and intelligent jurist. She is an excellent legal writer and carefully considers each argument. Her work ethic is unparalleled. Moreover, Judge Nakasone is a kind and thoughtful person.

Judge Nakasone is also an active participant in the community. I was able to experience this firsthand when I attended her karate class at Chozen-ji Zen Dojo and when I watched her lead the karate demonstration at last year's Okinawan Festival. While she manages a busy schedule, she is generous with her time, especially when it comes to mentorship and education. As a young woman of color and first-generation lawyer, I feel grateful for the opportunity to learn from and be mentored by Judge Nakasone.

I am confident that she has the legal expertise, integrity, and demeanor to succeed in this position. Our State would be incredibly lucky to have Judge Nakasone lead the ICA. I respectfully urge this Committee to recommend her confirmation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Miranda E. L. Tafoya". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large 'M' and a stylized 'T'.

Miranda Tafoya

April 21, 2025

Dear Sirs,

We would like to express our wholeheartedly support for Karen T. Nakasone for confirmation as Chief Judge of the Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals. We are very impressed with her experiences in her professional life and even more with her well-rounded interests in her life and community. We think that experiences in the different areas of Law makes her a very capable Judge at any level.

She has a calm demeanor and exhibits common sense. She has solid values that our society is slowly losing grips on. She wants to help as many people as possible and work for a better society.

This is not an eloquently written letter, but please know it is our heartfelt opinion. We need good people like Karen T. Nakasone in our Judicial System. Please confirm her appointment.

Mahalo nui Aloha,

Maurice Yamasato

Past President Hawaii United Okinawan Association

Jean Yamasato

Retired school teacher

April 20, 2025

Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Re: Written Testimony for Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals,
Gubernatorial Appointee – Judge Karen T. Nakasone

Dear Senator Rhoads and Senator Gabbard,

I am writing today in support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone's confirmation as Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have had the privilege and pleasure of becoming closely acquainted with Judge Nakasone through our mutual affiliation with the Hawaii United Okinawa Association over the past 16 years. During this time, (albeit not a judge or an attorney, myself) I have found her to possess many of the qualities that I would think a chief judge should have – integrity, fairness, analytical and decision-making skills, and the ability to make tough decisions. She also possesses the human side which I would imagine are important as well – patience, compassion, empathy, and humility.

Her education, professional experience and activities, community activities, and her many honors, recognitions and awards obviously speak for themselves Governor Green appointed her to the position.

Given the above, I believe Judge Nakasone is an ideal candidate for the position and I highly recommend that her appointment be confirmed.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my support for Judge Nakasone.

Sincerely,

Norman M. Nakasone
Senior Vice President – Retired
Central Pacific Bank

2011 President
Hawaii United Okinawa Association

April 20, 2025

The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Letter in SUPPORT of Karen T. Nakasone's Nomination as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals, State of Hawaii

Dear Chair Rhoads and members of the Committee,

I write in full support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone's nomination to be Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I have known Karen for over 25 years, first as State Public Defenders and the last 8 years when I was a full time District Court Judge for the First Circuit. Karen is a dear friend from the old days. She impressed me from the first day with her intelligence, humility, perseverance and her keen sense of humor. Nobody worked harder and was more prepared than Karen. No one cared more for her clients and protected their rights. No one spends 15 years as a Public Defender without possessing a true love and commitment to the cause! Karen has proven herself over the many years as a defense attorney and judge (Circuit-Criminal/Civil; ICA), her record speaks for itself. I offer these further insights into the Karen I know.

FLOWER GIRL. Karen's parents ran a flower shop on Fort Street Mall. The store was open 12 hours a day, 364 days a year, only taking New Year's Day off. She learned very quickly the value of hard work and parental sacrifice. No doubt she has passed this on to her amazing twin daughters.

THE WAY OF THE SWORD. Karen has been a lifelong practitioner of the Japanese martial art of Kendo. The philosophy of Kendo emphasizes discipline, respect, and self-improvement. Karen has employed these principles in all aspects of her personal and professional life. The rigorous training and laser focus has helped her deal with very difficult cases and decisions as a judge. Her compass always points to True North.

I have no doubt that Karen will excel as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. She has the experience, the temperament, the courage and the compassion to lead this Court into a new era.

Mahalo and Aloha,

/s/ William M. Domingo
District Judge, (ret)

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/20/2025 11:03:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Nagano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Appointment of Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Hawai‘i Intermediate Court of Appeals

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am submitting a letter of strong support to appoint Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Hawai‘i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I met Karen when we both attended the University of the Ryukyus, in Okinawa, Japan, as exchange students through the Hawai‘i United Okinawan Association (HUOA) and Okinawa Prefectural Government Scholarship Program. We have continued contact through our mutual membership in the HI-SAI Okinawa, Hawai‘i-Okinawa Scholarship Alumni group.

At the University of the Ryukyus, Karen studied with fellow foreign exchange students from the U.S., Canada, South America, and Southeast Asia, and formed friendships with local Okinawan university students. As a member of the HI-SAI Okinawa group, Karen participated in a performance showcase, promoting Okinawan culture through the arts, and encouraging young adults to apply for the HUOA-sponsored scholarship program. From the time I met her, Karen went from a scholarship recipient to an active contributor to the local community, paying forward the knowledge and experiences gained through these cultural exchanges, to the next generation.

I believe the state of Hawai‘i will benefit from Judge Karen Nakasone serving as the Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Thank you for your time and attention to this letter of support.

Sincerely,

Alice Nagano

April 21, 2025

The Honorable Josh Green
Governor, State of Hawai'i
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

SUBJECT: Support for Judge Karen Nakasone for Chief Judge of the Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA)

Dear Governor Green,

I am writing this letter of support to appoint Karen T. Nakasone for Chief Judge of the Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I have known Judge Nakasone for over 20 years as an active member of the Hawaii United Okinawan Association (HUOA). I have served on the Executive Council for the HUOA and everyone in the community knows Karen as a lifelong volunteer in various HUOA activities, from hosting visiting guests from Okinawa to swearing in the HUOA Officers every year. She has been active in all aspects of the organization. I am landscape architect and planner, but know Karen as a parent as we both tried to instill a strong appreciation for culture and the arts to our children from a young age. Although our children are in college we are still active supporters of various musical groups, Okinawan cultural and education groups, and also assist with giving back to the public school community. She is a strong supporter of the next generation of leaders and is always willing to guide and mentor. As an Okinawan karate instructor, Karen also provides learning opportunities in the martial arts for her students and as well as the larger community. Karen is actively involved in every community she is a part of, lifting up all those who she interacts with.

I have read about her many cases and rulings and was continually pleased to hear the decisions on various court rulings. The decisions have always been just and fair. Karen's intelligence, sense of humor, sense of community, balanced lifestyle and calm demeanor make her an excellent Chief Judge.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



AGY LLC
Aolani Yamasato-Gragas

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 7:57:07 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Jackson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone. She is an excellent role model for women lawyers and has strong ties to Hawaii. She has given so much to the community during her free time while juggling the demands of being on the bench.

She is fair, impartial, and a good judge of character. She is even tempered and has a good disposition about her.

I practiced law with her presiding. I witnessed how she treated everyone that came before with respect and dignity.

I fully support her.

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 8:14:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sat Freedman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support the appointment of Karen Nakasone as Chief Judge of the ICA. I appeared in front of her many times when she was a Circuit Court judge, and she is highly intelligent and was always well prepared.

Thank you,

Sat Freedman

Casey T. Miyashiro
ctm@hawaiiilawyer.com
(808) 531-8031

VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI. 96813

**RE: [GM 790] Letter in SUPPORT of the Appointment of Hon. Karen T. Nakasone
to Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Honorable Committee Members,

I am a civil litigator at the law firm of Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert, located in Honolulu. I write to express my strong **SUPPORT** for Governor Green's appointment of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone to serve as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

Judge Nakasone is the right person for this role. I had the privilege of externing for Judge Nakasone while I was in law school, which allowed me to witness how adept and diligent she is as a jurist. But more importantly, I learned she is not afraid to take risks and make rulings she believes is right, even if it goes against established precedent and even if it challenges power—which, in recent times, we have seen is a crucial guardrail to protecting our way of life. Indeed, some of the seminal cases in Hawai'i's jurisprudence have come under the leadership of bold, forward-thinking ICA Chief Judges. Judge Nakasone is that bold type of leader and, together with her nearly two decades of experience as a Circuit Court Judge and an ICA Associate Judge, she is extremely well-suited for this role.

Another reason Judge Nakasone would make an excellent Chief Judge is her deep love of community. She served as President of the Japanese American Citizens League, Honolulu Chapter; took on many roles with Hawaii Women Lawyers, including as Judicial Equity Committee Chair; and volunteered heavily with her children's public-school programs, just to name a few. Former U.S. Representative Shirley Chisholm once said, "Service is the rent we pay for living on this earth," and Judge Nakasone embodies this sentiment perfectly. She understands that giving back not only empowers others but enriches us as well. We grow through our experiences and interactions with others, and I wholeheartedly believe she is ready to serve all your constituents in this position of immense trust.

Lastly, there seems to be emphasis being placed on Judge Nakasone's gender. See, e.g., "Governor Green Appoints New Chief Judge for Intermediate Court of Appeals" (Apr. 3, 2025) (noting recent appointments will result in 41 women and 38 men seated in the judiciary). While gender equity is an important aspiration to ensure everyone's voices are

heard and respected, I hope this does not overshadow the tremendous amount of hard work and grit it took for Judge Nakasone to get to this position. I sincerely ask the Committee to give due weight to the strengths she will bring to this role and to make its recommendation to the Senate based on merit and her demonstrated ability to serve our community capably and faithfully.

We will be in good hands with Judge Nakasone as Chief Judge of the ICA.

Respectfully Submitted,
/s/ Casey T. Miyashiro
Casey T. Miyashiro

April 21, 2025

Committee on Judiciary State of Hawai'i Senate
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: In Strong Support of Karen T. Nakasone for Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:


It is with great enthusiasm that I submit this testimony in strong support of the nomination of Associate Judge Karen T. Nakasone to the position of Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA). I offer this testimony on behalf of myself, as an individual member of the community.

My strong support for Judge Nakasone stems from witnessing firsthand her dedication, integrity, and leadership within our community. These observations, particularly in roles highlighting her commitment to service and mentorship, provide clear evidence of her exceptional suitability for the position of Chief Judge.

I have come to know Judge Nakasone primarily through her significant involvement and steadfast support within our community, particularly with the Hawaii United Okinawa Association (HUOA). She is a familiar and respected figure within the organization, consistently demonstrating her commitment to its mission and activities. For as long as I can recall, Judge Nakasone has graciously presided over the Oath of Office ceremony for new HUOA leadership, a testament to her dedication to community service and cultural heritage. Her consistent presence underscores her commitment to community stewardship.

Furthermore, I recognize Judge Nakasone's leadership extends beyond traditional community roles into teaching and mentorship. As a Karate Sensei at the Chozen-ji International Zen Dojo of Hawaii, she embodies discipline, focus, and guidance. I briefly experienced her leadership style firsthand as a student of hers and have observed her capacity to lead and inspire within the demanding environment of the dojo. This ability to teach, command respect, and foster growth translates directly to the qualities needed for effective judicial leadership.

On a more personal note, I have often observed Judge Nakasone's deep connection to her family. Seeing her attend numerous Okinawan community events accompanied by her family, including her mother, speaks volumes about her character and grounding in values that are essential to our



community fabric. This demonstrates a wholeness of character – balancing professional demands with personal and community commitments.

Beyond these community insights, Judge Nakasone possesses a significant and commendable judicial track record. Appointed first to the Circuit Court in 2011 and subsequently elevated to the Intermediate Court of Appeals in 2018, she brings years of valuable experience from both trial and appellate levels. Throughout her tenure, she has earned a reputation for her sharp intellect, thorough preparation, judicial fairness, and respectful demeanor towards all parties. Her written opinions are known for their clarity and careful reasoning, reflecting a deep commitment to the principles of justice and the rule of law.

Judge Nakasone embodies a unique blend of this proven judicial experience, community dedication, and inherent leadership qualities. During these uncertain times, Hawai'i needs strong, principled leaders more than ever. Judge Karen Nakasone, with her demonstrated excellence in justice and deep commitment to the community, is precisely the kind of leader the Intermediate Court of Appeals requires. Her fairness, integrity, calm demeanor, and ability to connect with people from all walks of life are invaluable assets.

Therefore, I am in strong support of her confirmation as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I am confident that Judge Karen T. Nakasone possesses the skills, temperament, and vision necessary to lead the ICA effectively and continue serving the people of Hawai'i with distinction.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

David Ryo Jones

President (2024-2025), United Japanese Society of Hawaii
Past-President (2022), Hawaii United Okinawa Association

April 21, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Sent via Internet

**RE: Support for the Nomination of Judge Karen T. Nakasone to the Seat of Chief Justice of the State of Hawai'i
Intermediate Court of Appeals**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to share my strongest support for the nomination of Judge Karen T. Nakasone to be selected as Chief Justice of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I am a friend of Judge Nakasone, and I am very proud to call her a friend, as she is a person of high moral character, integrity, credibility and profound respect.

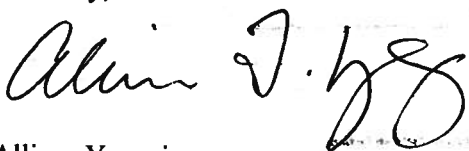
I was first introduced to Judge Nakasone through volunteer work in the Okinawan community. We both are past recipients of the Okinawa Prefectural Scholarship for people of Okinawan ancestry, and our desire to promote and support our community and organization brought us together to organize a fundraising project for the Hawaii United Okinawan Association (HUOA). Since becoming friends with Judge Nakasone, I have held her in the highest esteem and regard because I have witnessed her to be objective, fair, open-minded, thoughtful of people and her surroundings, and profoundly ethical. She is very thorough, critically analytical and meticulous when considering any issue that is presented to her, and I admire her ability to be respectful, even in the most difficult or challenging situations. I have also gotten to know members of her family as well, and she is the embodiment of the values and morals that her parents cherished. As teachers of cultural arts, Karate and Chozen-ji method of Zen meditation for Judge Nakasone and Okinawan dance and music for myself, we both agree upon the importance of transmitting traditions and values to our children and the younger generations. Judge Nakasone's commitment and dedication to sharing her values and traditions offer further example as to how she continues to strive to make Hawai'i a better place for all of us, beyond her work in the legal community.

Aside from her membership and work with the HUOA, Judge Nakasone also is affiliated with the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). Again, her commitment to fairness and respect serves as the foundation for her ability to "see the big picture," and combined with her humility, makes her an exemplary member of our Okinawan and Japanese communities. Her appreciation for etiquette, civility and mindfulness is indicative of her personal conduct at all times, as she always travels the "High Road."

I know Karen Nakasone to be a very trustworthy, honest and humble person who is committed to Hawaii. She possesses all of the necessary qualities that I would hope Hawaii's judges would have and call upon when interpreting and determining the laws of our lands. I would like to again reiterate that I am proud to call her my friend, and I hope very much that you will look favorably upon her nomination as I believe that she is truly the best candidate for this seat.

Thank you for your consideration of my letter and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison Yanagi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "Y" and "G" at the end.

Allison Yanagi

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 8:44:55 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynda Camarao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony of G.M. 790. I **strongly support** Governor's nomination of Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Thank you,

Lynda Camarao

DATE: April 21, 2025
TO: Commission on Judicial Appointments State of Hawai'i
RE: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone as
Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals

Dear Chair Rhoades, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Commission,

I am writing to offer my wholehearted recommendation for the appointment of The Honorable Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Judge Nakasone has consistently exemplified the highest standards of judicial temperament and integrity throughout her distinguished career on the bench. Since her appointment to the Intermediate Court of Appeals, she has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to the fair and impartial administration of justice, approaching each case with deep respect for the law and an unwavering dedication to the people of Hawai'i.

Equally important is her longstanding commitment to public service, mentorship, and judicial education. She is widely admired among her colleagues for her humility, collaborative spirit, and leadership that make her exceptionally well-suited to serve as Chief Judge. She brings not only depth of experience but a vision grounded in fairness and equality under the law.

Judge Nakasone has deep roots within the community and has consistently volunteered at various Hawaii United Okinawa Association events. During the pandemic, she recognized that our youth had been sequestered for far too long due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Judge Nakasone volunteered to teach Okinawan-style karate to my teenage daughters, and others, to promote physical and mental well-being. This is just one of the many contributions Judge Nakasone has provided to the community.

Judge Nakasone possesses the legal experience, ethical grounding, and administrative capabilities that are essential to leading the Intermediate Court of Appeals into the future. I can think of no one more deserving of this honor and responsibility. Thank you for your careful consideration of this recommendation. Please feel free to contact me should you require any further information.

Sincerely,
Brandon Nakasone

Lieutenant
Honolulu Police Department
Professional Standards Office
Criminal Investigation Section

Immediate-Past President
Hawai'i United Okinawa Association

April 21, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Senate
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair Gabbard:

Please find this letter in strong support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge for the Intermediate Court of Appeals ("ICA"), State of Hawai'i.

As Judge Nakasone's former extern and longtime law clerk, I had the benefit of working for Judge Nakasone during every stage of her judicial career: from the civil and criminal calendars at the Circuit Court of the First Circuit ("Circuit Court") and at the ICA. Judge Nakasone's extensive knowledge of civil and criminal law, along with her longtime trial experience as a public defender and as a trial judge, have more than prepared her to be Chief Judge of the ICA.

While serving as Judge Nakasone's extern and law clerk at the Circuit Court, Judge Nakasone was always known for running a well-managed case calendar and efficient courtroom. Judge Nakasone was well-prepared for our hearings and other matters, sought input from the court staff, and was understanding of everyone's time and schedules. When we were faced with challenging cases, Judge Nakasone did not fear difficult decisions, and dedicated the time and effort to make fair and just rulings. Many civil and criminal attorneys appreciated Judge Nakasone's presence on the trial bench because she was always prepared, was always respectful, and was always impartial and reasonable to all parties. Numerous jurors shared that Judge Nakasone was always considerate and communicative with them and made the intimidating trial process more enjoyable.

Judge Nakasone's many years of civil and criminal judicial trial experience, combined with her prior experience as an appellate law clerk and a public defender, more than prepared her for appellate work. Judge Nakasone brought the same diligent, hardworking attitude and work ethic from the trial level to the ICA, which shows in writing our numerous appellate decisions. Furthermore, no matter how busy, Judge Nakasone would always take the time to have meaningful discussions about our cases with the law clerks and the other ICA judges to ensure that every issue or argument was thoughtfully addressed. Her knowledge of the law and her experience at the Circuit Court and ICA will make her an invaluable leader of the ICA.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Judge Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge of the ICA, and for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sara M. Hayden

Sara M. Hayden, Esq.



GLENDON & PONCE, LLC
CRYSTAL K. GLENDON, ESQ.
KELLI K. LEE PONCE, ESQ.
1001 Bishop Street, Suite 710
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Telephone: (808) 762-7643 or (808) 223-8931
Fax: (808) 758-5253
Email: crystal@glendonponce.com
Email: kelli@glendonponce.com

April 21, 2025

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: **GM 790, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals, Judicial Nominee *KAREN T. NAKASONE***

Hearing: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 9:15 a.m.
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conf. Rm. 225
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, Senator Chang, Senator San Buenaventura and Senator Awa,

I strongly support the nomination of Karen T. Nakasone to the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals as Chief Judge. Judge Nakasone has been an exemplary judge since her appointment to the Circuit Court bench in 2011 and the ICA in 2020. I have the utmost confidence that she will execute her new role as Chief Judge of the ICA with intelligence, compassion and diligence.

I am currently a partner at Glendon & Ponce, a small firm handling state and federal criminal defense and civil litigation matters. I am also the Chair of the State of Hawai'i Defender Council, President of the Paepae o He'eia Board of Directors, and member of the Native Hawaiian Bar Association Board of Directors. I have been practicing law before the State and Federal Courts in Hawai'i since 2004.

I first met Judge Nakasone in 2004 when I started at the Office of the Public Defender. At the time, she was a senior appellate attorney, responsible for a heavy appellate caseload and representation of imprisoned clients before the Hawai'i Paroling Authority. I recall her willingness to train younger deputies and be available for any questions, big or small. She would take the time to explain procedures and brainstorm appellate issues, always making herself available for the many inquiries trial deputies had for her. Most of all, I recall how hard-working and compassionate she is. You could always find her at her desk, meticulously working on task after

task to get the job done. Yet, she would make the time to check in on her fellow co-workers, especially the women. She would talk about work-life balance and let us know that, while it's hard to juggle being present and diligent at work and still make time for family life, it is doable. She set a great example for us all by maximizing her time in the office so she could get home at a decent hour and not miss family time with her twin daughters. She was a leader at the office, in her quiet way, contributing to training and teaching young Public Defenders when she wasn't even a supervisor. It was no surprise to anyone at the OPD in 2011 that she was the first person to be appointed to a judicial position directly from the OPD in more than 11 years. It was also no surprise to any of us that she achieved a position on the appellate bench in 2020. She is a natural who leads by example, humility and compassion. This is what she will bring to the table as Chief Judge.

I firmly support Judge Nakasone's appointment to be the Chief Judge of the ICA. I look forward to her continued contributions in this new role.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal K. Glendon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Crystal K. Glendon

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 9:01:27 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trudy Murakami	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads and Vice-Chair Gabbard:

I write in strong support of Judge Karen Nakasone's nomination for Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. My family and I have known Judge Nakasone her entire life and believe that her experiences both in and outside of the legal profession have equipped her with the requisite temperament and skills to be an exceptional jurist that is committed to equal justice under the law. She has committed her life to public service as evidenced by her time as a law clerk to Justice Simeon Acoba, as a public defender, Circuit Court Judge, and now as an Associate Judge on the Intermediate Court of Appeals. In each of those roles she has been a zealous advocate for her clients, the law, and the community as a whole.

I urge this Committee to report Judge Nakasone's nomination out of this committee favorably and vote in the affirmative at final confirmation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Murakami and Ohana

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 9:09:30 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Chaing	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 21, 2025

Dear Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor,

This testimony is offered in support of judicial nominee, Karen T. Nakasone. I write in strong support of the confirmation of the nomination of Karen T. Nakasone, Esq. to serve as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals. As Judge Nakasone's former law clerk, I witnessed her dedication, diligence, integrity and even temperament first hand. She is not only an excellent scholar, writer, and communicator, she is also fair, cares deeply for our community, and is very easy to work with. She sets a high standard for decorum and work ethic, and leads by example. She is the perfect candidate to lead Hawaii's Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Respectfully,

Tiffany Chiang, Esq.

(808) 372- 8298

JAMES S. TABE

P.O. BOX 893846
MILILANI, HAWAI‘I 96789

April 22, 2025

GM 790: Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Judge to the Intermediate Court of Appeals, Gubernatorial Nominee, Karen T. Nakasone, for a term to expire in 10 years

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

I fully support the confirmation of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge to the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I have known Judge Nakasone since 1996 when she joined the Office of the Public Defender, and I had the opportunity to work closely with Judge Nakasone when she was assigned to the appellate division. I was immediately impressed with not only her intellect but also with her work ethic and her commitment to and her compassion for the those in the community who needed the most help. Her contributions as an appellate attorney have led to several precedent-setting Hawai‘i Supreme Court cases.

Judge Nakasone has also proven herself as an outstanding jurist during her five years as an associate judge in the ICA and her nine years as a circuit court judge. As a circuit court judge, she presided over ninety trials (seventy of which were jury trials) countless of evidentiary hearings, motions, settlement conferences, and sentencing hearings. When she was first appointed to the first circuit court, the Chief Justice had no choice but to assign her to the civil trials division, as she would have had to recuse herself from many criminal cases since she arrived directly from the Office of the Public Defender. With limited experience in civil litigation, Judge Nakasone worked tirelessly educating herself in civil matters. Because of her strong work ethic and her intellect, she soon became a well-respected judge in the civil litigation community.

As an associate judge with the ICA, Judge Nakasone has demonstrated through her opinions and orders (which are available for the public to read) that she not only possesses the intellect to grasp complex legal issues, but more importantly, she has the ability to explain and articulate her decisions in a clear, thorough, and intelligent manner.

In addition to being an outstanding associate judge, I sincerely believe that Associate Judge Nakasone will be an excellent chief judge. When she was with the Office of the Public Defender, she earned the trust, admiration and respect of not only her colleagues but also the prosecutors and the judges. She also has leadership experience; she has previously held leadership positions in various organizations, including president and vice-president of the Japanese American Citizens League, Honolulu Chapter, and president of the Stevenson Middle School Association of Parents and Teachers.

Judge Nakasone holds herself to high standards of preparation and performance. She is well respected in the legal community for her professionalism, integrity, and legal knowledge. Indeed, she has earned the reputation as one of the brightest legal minds in the State of Hawai'i.

Finally, the appointment and consent of a progressive chief judge to the Intermediate Court of Appeals takes on a greater significance in light of the current political climate on the federal level, including the composition of the U.S. Supreme Court. The U.S. Constitution will certainly be interpreted very narrowly in the foreseeable future. Consequently, there is a very real danger of significant erosion of the constitutional rights and interests of women (e.g., right of privacy, right to choose), minorities (e.g., right to vote), LBGTQ+ community (e.g., right to marry, adopt, equal benefits), immigrants (e.g., right to due process, equal protection), wage-earners (e.g., right to medical care, benefits), and the accused (e.g., right to fair trial, due process). Fortunately, for the people of the State of Hawai'i, when the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of a provision that is present in both the U.S. and Hawai'i Constitutions does not adequately preserve the rights and interests sought to be protected, the Hawai'i appellate courts have not hesitated to recognize the appropriate protections as a matter of state constitutional law. Therefore, to ensure that the State Constitution continues to adequately preserve the broader rights and interests of the people of Hawai'i, it is imperative that the chief judge is someone who is courageous and willing to recognize that the Hawai'i Constitution bestows broader rights and protections than the U.S. Constitution. Associate Judge Nakasone is that someone.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in this matter.

LATE

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 9:22:33 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
catherine gutierrez souza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support Karen T. Nakasone's confirmation as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals for the State of Hawaii.

LATE

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 9:23:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynette Teruya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I write in ***strong support*** of Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai‘i Intermediate Court of Appeals. I have known Judge Nakasone for over 10 years through the Okinawa Prefectural Government Scholarship program as well as through other programs in our local community. Through my own interactions and observations of her interactions with others, I can attest to her stellar character and her strong sense of fairness and justice.

She is consistent, whether in public or private mode, in her fairness and objectivity. Strong family values keep her grounded and discipline keeps her even-keeled and mindful of doing the right thing. In addition, her many years of experience of being a judge has prepared her well for this next level. We need judges who genuinely care about the greater good of Hawai‘i and understand the impact their decisions have upon our community. Karen T. Nakasone is that judge.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony.

LATE

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 10:19:44 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Clarisse Kobashigawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in the strongest support of the confirmation of Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge for the State of Hawaii, Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Judge Nakasone is a shining light and example for so many members of our local community, nonprofit community and especially for all female legal practitioners in Hawaii. She has so many strengths - some of the most commonly referenced being her exceptional legal acumen, analysis and unbeatable work ethic. But most importantly it is the way that she holds herself out to the public at any given time that restores the public's faith in the justice system at a time when it is most needed. She is a prominent leader within our community who presents with the utmost humility, and kindest of hearts. Within her is always the truest sense of objectivity, fairness, justice, and when appropriate - compassion and empathy. Her professional and legal resume leave no doubt that she can handle the demands and responsibilities of a Chief Justice. But most importantly and especially in social and politically uncertain times like this, with her at the helm, people can at least breathe a little easier knowing that she will fulfill her duties with the highest level of objectivity and professionalism that the role demands.

I respectfully request that you confirm Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge for the State of Hawaii, Intermediate Court of Appeals.

LATE

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 10:37:15 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bert Ayabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Senator Karl Rhoads and Committee members,

I am writing this letter in strong support of Judge Karen Nakasone for the position of Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I have known Judge Nakasone for over 10 years and we both served as Circuit Court judges when she took the bench in 2011.

She is extremely hard working and was always well prepared for the cases that came before her. She has excellent judicial demeanor in court and is always very pleasant to deal with. Judge Nakasone would be an excellent Chief Judge and is the type of person we need to lead the Judiciary into the future.

Thank you for your time. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding Judge Nakasone.

Sincerely,

Bert Ayabe

DALE W. LEE
2108 Haena Drive
Honolulu, HI 98822

April 19, 2025

Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: Consideration and confirmation as Chief Judge of
the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals,
Gubernatorial Appointee, KAREN T. NAKASONE

Senators Rhoads, Gabbard and Committee Members:

It is a privilege to add my name to a long list of Judge KAREN T. NAKASONE supporters. Five years ago I endorsed Judge Nakasone's Appointment as Associate Judge on the Intermediate Court of Appeals and her proposed appointment to Chief Judge is a natural and highly deserved ascension.

The people of Hawaii are winners with this Confirmation.

Respectfully submitted,

DALE W. LEE

DALE W. LEE
Past President, Hawaii State Bar Association

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 11:17:27 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen L Shishido	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 18, 2025

Honorary Chair Karl Rhoads, Chair, Vice Chair Gabbard, and to the Committee on Judiciary

re: Governor's Message 790

I am honored to testify on behalf of **Karen T. Nakasone** on her confirmation to serve as **Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals**, under an executive appointment of Governor Josh Green. It is even more of an honor that I, as an ordinary citizen, am allowed to testify in this free country as part of my civil rights.

I have known Ms. Nakasone, both professionally and personally, for several years and it is with my highest regard that I support her confirmation to this prestigious Court. Ms. Nakasone's professional background is presented to your honorable body with myriad knowledge, experience, and so many facets of the business world.

I have served 35 years as a Government and Mayoral-appointee under three former Mayors, as well as Legislative-sessions and City Council staff and are familiar with the Judicial system; knowing the importance of non-partial ethics and integrity. I can attest to Ms. Nakasone's character, credentials, loyalty and strength in all that she pursues and always completing her tasks on hand with fortitude, and dedication to her job, family and friends.

Ms. Nakasone would be an outstanding member as Chief Judge to the Hawaii State Intermediate Court of Appeals and she would make you proud of such a confirmation.

Respectfully submitted,

KAREN LANI SHISHIDO

April 21, 2025

LATE

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee On Judiciary

Re: *GM 790 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Judge of the State of Hawai‘i Intermediate Court of Appeals, Gubernatorial Appointee, KAREN T. NAKASONE, for a term to expire in 10 years.*

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee On Judiciary:

I am writing in strong support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone’s nomination as Chief Judge of the Hawai‘i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

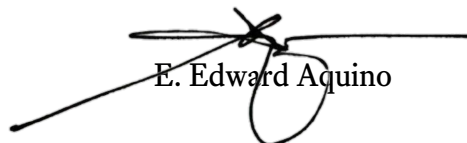
I first met Judge Nakasone when she was a law clerk for the Honorable Simeon R. Acoba when Justice Acoba was an Associate Judge at the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I came to know Judge Nakasone really when we worked together at the Office of the Public Defender.

When Judge Nakasone was appointed to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit and assigned to the Criminal Calendar, I appeared before her in many significant and high-profile cases.

In my experience with her, Judge Nakasone has always been humble, honest, straightforward and a consummate professional. In judging cases that come before her, Judge Nakasone has always demonstrated, not only her impressive legal acumen and keen understanding of the law, but also her commitment to ensuring justice when confronted with very difficult legal issues arising from the cases.

I urge you to confirm her nomination to serve as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Sincerely,


E. Edward Aquino

LATE

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 11:40:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacce Mikulanec	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong support of GM790, Karen T. Nakasone, to be Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Mahalo for your consideration.

J. Mikulanec

LATE

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 12:01:10 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dennis M. Ogawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I want to write this letter to support Karen T. Nakasone. For over 50 years, I was a professor at the University of Hawai'i and have been fortunate to work with many students. Ms. Nakasone continues to stand out as among the top 5% of all students who have enrolled in my American Studies courses.

Ms. Nakasone is intelligent and works hard to gain a command of the subject matter. She consistently wrote papers of high quality and in discussions with fellow classmates and with me during my office hours, demonstrated a keen ability to synthesize complex issues into well supported, coherent arguments.

Till this day, in the diligent work and remarks she communicates, her demeanor has never changed. She is always sincere, and her thoughts respectfully conveyed. Though serious and inquiring, she always makes an effort to listen first. I have rarely known anyone with a greater ability to be so calm and competent in even the most difficult of legal cases.

Without reservation, I support Karen T. Nakasone for Chief Judge on the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Sincerely,

Dennis M. Ogawa
Professor Emeritus
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

LATE

From: Jacquelyn T. Esser

Re: *Testimony in Strong Support of GM 790: Gubernatorial Appointee, Judge Karen T. Nakasone, for Chief Judge of the State of Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals*

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

I write in **strong support** of Judge Karen Nakasone's appointment as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I have had the privilege of knowing and working alongside Judge Nakasone as a colleague at the Office of the Public Defender, and later had the opportunity to appear in front of her when she served as a Circuit Court Judge. From the outset of my legal career, I looked up to Judge Nakasone as someone who exemplified exceptional intelligence, diligence, and integrity.

At the Public Defender's Office, she was widely respected for her sharp legal mind, her tireless work ethic, and unwavering commitment to justice. She approached every case with thorough preparation and a deep sense of responsibility – to both her clients and the law.

As a trial judge, Judge Nakasone continued to embody the qualities that define exceptional judicial temperament: fairness, patience, and professionalism. She was a careful and active listener, consistently respectful to all who appeared before her, and evenhanded in her rulings. Her courtroom was always one where both sides felt heard and respected.

Although I am not an appellate attorney and have not appeared before her since her appointment to the ICA, I am confident that Judge Nakasone continues to bring the same thoughtful and principled approach to her work on the appellate bench.

Judge Nakasone possesses all the attributes of an outstanding judge and leader. Her legal acumen, temperament, and experience make her exceptionally well-suited to serve as Chief Judge of the ICA. I am confident she will continue to lead with wisdom, humility, and steady judgment.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jacquelyn Esser

Jacquelyn Esser

LATE

Colbert M. Matsumoto
201 Merchant St., Suite 2000
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

April 21, 2025

The Honorable Karl Rhoads
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Governor's Message No. 790
Nomination of Karen Tooko Nakasone as
Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals of the State of Hawaii
Hearing Date: April 22, 2025

Dear Chair Rhoads & Members of the Committee:

This is to express my support for the nomination of Karen Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals of the State of Hawaii.

Judge Nakasone has distinguished herself through the years as a respected jurist with the highest level of integrity and sense of justice. More importantly throughout the many years I have known Judge Nakasone, her personality and character have consistently reflected core qualities of patience, courtesy, selflessness, and a clear-headed and open-minded perspective. Those qualities make her well suited to assume the leadership role of administering a court with six other strong-minded peer judges and ensuring that it operates smoothly and efficiently.

Throughout her career Judge Nakasone has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to public service and a desire to make a meaningful contribution to the betterment of our community. Our State and the Judiciary will benefit from the continued service of a dedicated and capable public servant like her.

I hope that you will share my confidence in Judge Nakasone's ability to provide key leadership and administrative skills in leading the ICA and confirm her nomination as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals of the State of Hawaii.

Very truly yours,



Colbert M. Matsumoto

LATE

April 21, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Daisy Hartsfield

SUBJECT: Consideration and Confirmation of Chief Judge of the State of Hawai`i Intermediate Court of Appeals, Gubernatorial Appointee, KAREN T. NAKASONE

Hearing: April 22, 2025, 9:15 AM, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference, State Capitol

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT:

I am the Social Services Division Administrator with the State of Hawai`i, Department of Human Services but submit this individual testimony as a private citizen. I apologize for this late testimony but felt compelled to testify in strong support of KAREN T. NAKASONE becoming the Chief Judge of the State of Hawai`i Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I have known KAREN T. NAKASONE (Judge Nakasone) for more than two decades. I first met her when I was a juvenile probation officer in Family Court and Judge Nakasone was a deputy public defender assigned to represent youth in law violation cases. Even back then, she was ALWAYS prepared, articulate, poised, smart, and most importantly, down-to-earth. Years later, when I clerked for Retired Circuit Court Judge Karl Sakamoto, I was able to witness Judge Nakasone as a Deputy Public Defender doing felony criminal cases. Again, she was very professional – punctual, prepared, knowledgeable, and respected by her clients and court staff. It was because of attorneys like her that I pursued a career in criminal law. I was fortunate to have worked at the Public Defender's Office while she was there. She was a great mentor for young attorneys like me and made time to offer support and guidance. Jump forward to today. Judge Nakasone was a Circuit judge for nine years and an Associate Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals since November 2020. Clearly, she has the legal experience and acumen to be a good Chief Judge of the ICA.

What will make her a great ICA Chief Judge, however, is her personal qualities. As a state administrator, I know that it takes more than experience and education to be an effective leader. It takes passion and a tough skin. One must be able to take the compliments as well as the criticism. I know Judge Nakasone can set aside her personal feelings to make tough decisions, decisions that the majority may not support or appreciate but nonetheless are fair and just. She will be able to not just deal with crises but is able to look forward and understand the impact of how decisions now will impact the future. She will also be a positive influence to those working with her. I respect her willingness to share her knowledge, her honesty about challenges of being a working mom trying to find the work-life balance, and her compassion for the people of Hawai`i.

Judge Nakasone's track record is solid! I am confident she will be an excellent ICA Chief Judge and look forward to seeing how the people of Hawai`i will continue to benefit from her success. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support.

JAMES T. LEAVITT, JR.
JOHN D. YAMANE
WOODRUFF K. SOLDNER
MICHAEL R. CRUISE

LEAVITT, YAMANE & SOLDNER

ATTORNEYS AT LAW
A LAW CORPORATION

NICOLE KALAKAU
RAFAEL K. RENTERIA
E. KAU'I YAMANE

Of Counsel:
R. AARON CREPS
STUART M. KODISH

PACIFIC GUARDIAN CENTER – MAUKA TOWER
737 BISHOP STREET, SUITE 1740
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

TELEPHONE: (808) 521-7474
FACSIMILE: (808) 521-7749

LATE

April 21, 2025

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the elevation of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone to the position of Chief Judge of the Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals. Judge Nakasone's tenure on the bench has been marked by a commitment to justice, a strong understanding of the law, and dedication to public service.

Since her appointment to the Intermediate Court of Appeals, Judge Nakasone has consistently demonstrated exceptional judicial temperament, analytical rigor, and clarity in legal reasoning. Her opinions are thoughtfully crafted, balancing meticulous legal scholarship with respect for the people and communities impacted by the court's decisions. Her ability to synthesize complex legal issues and render decisions that are both just and understandable is a testament to her intellect and integrity.

Beyond her legal acumen, Judge Nakasone has earned the respect and admiration of her peers, attorneys, and community members alike. She brings humility, empathy, and a collaborative spirit to her work. These qualities are indispensable in a judicial leader. Her background as a former trial court judge and public defender gives her a broad and inclusive perspective, rooted in a genuine understanding of the diverse realities faced by those who come before the courts. As a former prosecutor, I appeared before Judge Nakasone on numerous occasions and always had confidence that all parties would be heard and treated with respect.

Outside the courtroom, Judge Nakasone commits her time to bettering her community. Her service with various legal organizations and the Japanese American Citizens League demonstrate that she is a leader through and through.

In sum, Judge Nakasone embodies the very best of Hawaii's judicial tradition: excellence, fairness, and aloha. I can think of no one more qualified or more deserving of this important leadership role. I strongly urge the Senate to confirm her appointment as Chief Judge.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

Rafael Kiichiro Renteria

LATE

PETER C. HSIEH

Attorney at Law

Davies Pacific Center
841 Bishop St., Suite 2201
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 521-3336
Facsimile: (808) 566-0347
E-mail: hsiehlaw808@gmail.com

April 21, 2025

Via Email

The Senate Confirmation Committee
State of Hawaii

Re: Karen T. Nakasone – Chief Judge of the ICA

Dear Sir/Madame:

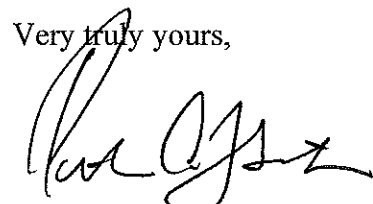
I wholeheartedly support the appointment of the Honorable Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals, State of Hawaii.

Judge Nakasone's experience in the law – as a trial lawyer, a trial judge of the First Circuit Court, and a judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals – makes her a fine choice as Chief Judge. I have had the honor to appear before her many times when she was a trial judge, and she handled all the proceedings with sound reason and compassion.

Judge Nakasone is imminently qualified to lead the ICA as the Chief Judge of the ICA, and I strongly support her appointment.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,



PETER C. HSIEH



LATE

MICHAEL JAY GREEN AND ASSOCIATES, INC. Attorney at Law

Davies Pacific Center
841 Bishop Street, Suite 2201
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 521-3336
Fax: (808) 566-0347

April 21, 2025

Via Email

The Senate Confirmation Committee
State of Hawaii

Re: Karen T. Nakasone – Chief Judge of the ICA

Dear Sir/Madame:

I strongly support the appointment of the Honorable Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals, State of Hawaii.

Judge Nakasone's 29-year experience in the law, first as trial lawyer (15 years Public Defender's Office), then as trial judge (9 years First Circuit Court), and an appellate judge (5 years on the ICA) makes her imminently qualified to lead the ICA as Chief Judge. I have had the privilege of observing her legal skills as a public defender and had the honor of litigation cases in her circuit court courtroom.

Based on her wisdom, experience, and compassion, Judge Nakasone is well qualified to serve as the Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals of the State of Hawaii, and I wholeheartedly support her appointment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Jay Green', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

MICHAEL JAY GREEN

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 2:11:42 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
christine kubota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Christine A. Kubota

cak@hawaiilawyer.com

(808) 531-8031

VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Hawai'i State Capitol

Honolulu, HI. 96813

RE: [GM 790] Letter in SUPPORT of the Appointment of Hon. Karen T. Nakasone

to Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals .

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Honorable Committee Members,

I write to express my strong SUPPORT for Governor Green's appointment of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone to serve as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

I currently serve as the President of the law firm Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert, located in downtown Honolulu, and I also serve on the Boards of various non-profit organizations in Hawaii. I have known Judge Nakasone for decades, mostly in my role as Past Chair of the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce, United Japanese Society of Hawaii, and the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, as she has assisted us in various

programs and events. Throughout all our interactions, I have found she brings passion, creativity, and a tenacity to give her all to ensure our success. Through this, she has garnered the admiration of many respected community leaders. Together with her stellar resume and her experience at both the trial and appellate levels, I am pleased she is being considered for this position.

While my practice does not require regular interactions with the ICA, I often hear from my partners and peers that she brings the same intensity and passion in the courtroom as she does in service to her community. Judge Nakasone is the kind of leader we need for the ICA, which is why I wholeheartedly support her appointment to Chief Judge of the ICA.

Thank You,

Christine A. Kubota

Page 1 of 1

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/21/2025 9:29:18 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hugh Kojima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

I am writing in strong support of Judge Nakasone's appointment as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. I am currently a third-year law student at Richardson Law School. I externed in her chambers during the summer of 2024, and will be serving as one of her law clerks later this year. I believe Judge Nakasone's knowledge of the law, her spirit of generosity, and her concern for our community, are second to none. I have no doubt she will be a superb Chief Judge.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify,

Hugh Kojima

TRISHA Y. NAKAMURA

P.O. Box 61619, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96839 • trishanakamura@gmail.com

LATE

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Date: April 21, 2025

Hrg: April 22, 2025 at 9:15 a.m.

Re: GM 790; Strong Support for the Nomination of Karen T. Nakasone

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone for her nomination as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (“ICA”).¹ I have known Judge Nakasone since I was a young attorney before she became a Circuit Court Judge, first serving on the civil calendar, and then a Judge on the ICA. I have observed in her in different roles, notably as Judge and mentor, which highlight her myriad and superior qualifications to serve on the ICA.

A JUDGE OF PARAMOUNT ETHICAL STANDARDS AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Judge Nakasone is driven by her commitment to the rule of law.

When Judge Nakasone was appointed to the criminal trial calendar, in order to remain objective and unbiased, she made clear that our mentor-mentee relationship would shift (my words, not hers). This was certainly not an everyday conversation. It captures for me Judge Nakasone’s appreciation and deep understanding of the judiciary and all that it represents—due process, fairness, and justice—and her strong ability to say what must be said, even if awkward or uncomfortable.

Judge will put her role as a judge and ensuing obligation to uphold the Constitution at the fore. This is her service to our community, those who appear before her, and all parties involved in the appellate cases before the ICA.

IMPECCABLY DILIGENT, PREPARED, AND HARD-WORKING

When I was a Deputy Public Defender, I made numerous appearances before Judge Nakasone. She was always prepared—from knowing what had happened at a prior trial call, to presiding over evidentiary hearings on various motions. Judge Nakasone demanded the best of the attorneys who appeared before and never shirked from doing the same.

Working into the evenings and on weekends, Judge is mindful of the important and tireless work of the ICA, being the first court of appellate review. The role of the Chief Judge is a thankless one: charged with management to keep the court running, assignments outside of an already massive caseload, and responding to requests and emergencies with little recognition. Judge Nakasone will not shy from the pressures and extra tasks associated with the role.

DEDICATED TEACHER

Prior to serving on the bench, Judge Nakasone served on the Board of the Japanese American Citizens League and tirelessly invested in young board members, including me; at the Public Defender’s Office, she would do the same. Those mentored by Judge have gone on to become a judge, managers in government and the nonprofit world, and partners at firms. In my present work at the Law School, I see the time Judge dedicates to law students who volunteer or extern in her chambers. She sets high standards so that young attorneys can learn, hone their skills, and build strong foundations as practitioners. I know that Judge will continue to build our next leaders.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone as the Senior Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

¹ This testimony is submitted in my personal capacity.

LATE

April 21, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: GM 790 – Testimony in Support of Judge Karen T. Nakasone

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing to express my strong support for the nomination and confirmation of Associate Judge Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. As an aspiring law student in 2015, I had the unique privilege of observing Judge Nakasone preside over a complex three-week jury trial during her time as a Circuit Court Judge. To say that I was impressed by her professional conduct, skill, and intellect, is an understatement.

Throughout the proceedings, Judge Nakasone demonstrated exemplary judicial temperament: firm yet fair, analytical yet compassionate. She addressed complex legal issues with clarity and thoroughness, delivering well-reasoned rulings that reflected not only a clear understanding of the law, but also sound judgment and fairness. Judge Nakasone maintained control of a courtroom riddled with tension and emotional testimony with remarkable composure. Most importantly, Judge Nakasone ensured that all parties, regardless of background or representation, were treated with respect and given a full opportunity to be heard.

My formative experience in Judge Nakasone's courtroom served as the catalyst in my decision to attend law school and ultimately become a licensed attorney. I have no doubt that she will continue to inspire the next generation of aspiring attorneys and will lead the Intermediate Court of Appeals with distinction.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my steadfast support for Judge Karen T. Nakasone's nomination and confirmation as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Sincerely,

Ciarra Sapigao

Ciarra Sapigao, Esq.

KEITH S. SHIGETOMI
ATTORNEY AT LAW
P.O. BOX 17779
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817
TELEPHONE (808) 753-1774
keithsshigetomi@gmail.com

LATE

April 18, 2025

Senate President Ronald Kouchi
Judiciary Chair Karl Rhoads
Judiciary Vice-Chair Mike Gabbard
Members, Hawaii Senate

Re: The Honorable Karen T. Nakasone

Dear All,

I am excited at the prospect of the confirmation of the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. The Judiciary has reached a point where many of its finest and most experienced Justices/Judges have left or will be leaving the bench due to retirement. The next wave of leaders must be selected to continue to lead the Judiciary forward.

I have had the opportunity to appear before judges all across the State, including multi-week trials in every circuit. As in all professions, some judges have been good, some not so good. I regularly appeared before Judge Nakasone in the First Circuit Court for a number of years. Judge Nakasone was/is an excellent judge. She was/is always well prepared, she was/is always respectful to all parties and she made the difficult decisions when needed. That should come as no surprise. I met Judge Nakasone when she was a young lawyer. She had a high profile case in which the public sentiment was strongly against her client. That case was an extremely difficult one due to the seriousness of the charges and the publicity it received. Through her preparation, effort and perseverance, she got a favorable outcome for her client. She earned my respect from that point forward. Judge Nakasone continued forward to a successful appellate practice, before she was selected as a circuit court judge. She is knowledgeable and experienced at both trial and appellate practice/law.

More importantly, Judge Nakasone is a good and honorable person. She sees the positive in people. She believes in family. She treats everyone fairly and respectfully. Judge

Nakasone truly cares about the people of Hawaii and is dedicated to being the best judge that she can be. She will be at the forefront of the new wave of leaders in the Judiciary. We will all benefit from her service. I ask that you confirm the Honorable Karen T. Nakasone as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith S. Shigetomi', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Keith S. Shigetomi

LATE

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/22/2025 3:39:21 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Derek R. Kobayashi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I submit this testimony in strong SUPPORT of Governor Green's appointment of Karen Nakasone to be the Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals. Judge Nakasone highly experienced having served on the ICA since November 2020, previously as First Circuit Court judge and is diligent, hard working, compassionate and fair. She has a strong legal intellect and excellent judicial temperament. Judge Nakasone is also a very involved member of the community and her service in this regard is noteworthy.

LATE

GM-790

Submitted on: 4/22/2025 10:33:33 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leighton Hara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please consider this letter my testimony in support of Karen T. Nakasone's confirmation as the Chief Judge of the State of Hawaii Intermediate Court of Appeals.

I am the managing partner of Ota & Hara, LLLC and have been a licensed attorney since 2002. My practice focuses on civil litigation.

I have appeared before Judge Nakasone when she presided over civil matters in the Circuit Court. She was always fair to the parties and counsel. Judge Nakasone was well briefed on the law, even if counsel for the parties did not raise the issue in their moving papers. She kept a very tight courtroom.

As an appellate court judge, she authored numerous opinions that were thoughtful and well written.

Judge Nakasone has always been hard working, fair, civic minded, and compassionate. As a senior deputy public defender, Judge Nakasone has spent her career assisting people who could not afford legal representation. She has also tried numerous jury trials to verdict and has successfully argued before Hawaii's appellate courts.

Judge Nakasone's experience, personality, and demeanor will serve the public well and are qualities which will make for an excellent Chief Judge of the ICA.

Leighton M. Hara



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

Judge Karen T. Nakasone
Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (GM790)

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

FROM: Mark M. Murakami
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 9:15 a.m.
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference
State Capitol

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) Board of Directors' comments on GM 790, Nomination of Judge Karen T. Nakasone for Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA).

After a rigorous process, described below, the HSBA Board of Directors concluded that Judge Nakasone is **QUALIFIED**. Judge Nakasone has dedicated much of her public service to the law, social justice efforts, and to examining the rights of indigent defendants. As a Judge, she has been afforded significant civil experience and has broadened the depth of her legal experience across various areas of the law. Judge Nakasone is well respected in and out of the courtroom, and will continue to bring her strong work ethic, leadership skills, dedication to public service, and respect for the law to the ICA.

The HSBA Board of Directors followed its multi-step process to arrive at its conclusion, which included:

- The nominee was notified of the HSBA appointment review process, which includes a questionnaire requesting educational credentials, legal and other professional work experiences, and personal references; a resume; a copy of the Judicial Selection Commission (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.
- The HSBA membership received an electronic notification of the appointment and a request for comments on the nominee.
- A neutral fact-finding body comprised of three HSBA Board members was called upon to review documentation submitted by the nominee, contact references submitted by the nominee review comments received from the HSBA membership, conduct follow-up for clarification, if necessary, and prepare a report for the HSBA Board.
- Judge Nakasone submitted documentation, which was reviewed, and the references listed were contacted for their personal opinions and

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Catherine A. Betts

observations. The comments and letters received from HSBA members reflected an affirmation of Judge Nakasone in all categories of the HSBA criteria, which include Integrity, Diligence, Legal knowledge and ability, Professional experience, Temperament, Financial responsibility, Public service, and Ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position.

- The Executive Director and I met with Judge Nakasone on April 17, 2025, to discuss the subcommittee's findings.
- On April 21, 2025, the HSBA Board of Directors interviewed Judge Nakasone in executive session.
- The HSBA Board deliberated and voted that Judge Nakasone was qualified.

Thank you for your time and allowing the HSBA to share our process and determination of qualification.