

HCR 45

REQUESTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO ESTABLISH
AND FUND A VETERAN WOMEN SERVICES COORDINATOR
POSITION WITHIN THE OFFICE OF VETERANS' SERVICES.

PSM, WAM

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HCR 45 REQUESTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE TO ESTABLISH AND FUND A VETERAN WOMEN SERVICES
COORDINATOR POSITION WITHIN THE OFFICE
OF VETERANS' SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY
AFFAIRS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN, JR.
DIRECTOR OF THE STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

April 20, 2015

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker and Committee Members:

I am Ron Han, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the concepts on House Concurrent Resolution 45.

Funding for this position was submitted in the division's biennium request but did not receive approval. A House and Senate Bill were introduced to obtain funding through the State Legislature during this session. If funding is not approved through this process, the State Office of Veterans Services will review a third alternative in having an existing Veterans Counselor take on an additional duty and to focus on issues affecting Women Veterans.

The State Office of Veterans Services recognizes the strong need to develop programs and to address critical issues affecting this fastest growing group of veterans.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Hawaii's Veteran community.

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senator Rosalyn baker, Vice Chair

DATE: Monday, April 20, 2015
TIME: 1:15 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 312

Good afternoon Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker, and members of the Committee. I am Carswell Ross, advisor to the Women Veterans Task Force Committee. I **strongly support** HCR45/HR19, which request the establishment and funding for a veterans counselor IV position within the Office of Veterans' Services, to assist all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans who served on active duty for the full period they were activated.

The Task Force was formed by the Legislature in 2012 to address the needs women veterans in Hawaii. We submitted a report to the 2013 Legislature that detailed preliminary findings concerning our women warriors. We found that military sexual trauma (MST) is rampant in the armed services, that homelessness and joblessness along with PTSD, are some of the major problems that our women face.

We feel there is some urgency to create this position, based on the Committee's research. Last year, in order to assess the scope and type of needs of our women veterans, we performed an informal survey of women veterans throughout the state. Our finding suggest that: (a) women veterans do not know what benefits they have; (b) women veterans did not know that there are services for PTSD, Military Sexual Trauma, access to OB/GYN and breastfeeding among others services; (c) that re-entry services and employment services were available; and (d) women who served are veterans.

The counselor position will provide a focus with which to address the specific needs of women veterans, bridging gaps in care. It will aid with the process of helping the approximately 12,000 women veterans in Hawaii to move forward in their lives. It will help the OVS to collect data, integrate services, educate women veterans on their benefits, assist women veterans in getting access to appropriate health care, assist the task force in outreach efforts and a host of other duties. But, probably most important, the counselor will help the Office of Veterans Services to assess what services are lacking or inadequate.

Hawaii's military women have served our nation often at great cost to their health, their lives and too often to their human dignity. As a state we need to recognize their sacrifice by addressing their needs. This position is the first step in doing that. Thank you for the opportunity to express my **support** for these Resolutions.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2015 11:16 AM
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Subject: *Submitted testimony for HCR45 on Apr 20, 2015 13:15PM*

HCR45

Submitted on: 4/15/2015

Testimony for PSM on Apr 20, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Allicyn Tasaka	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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