

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2489, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE

PRESENTATION TO THE
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BY

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

March 28, 2016

Good Morning, Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Committee:

I am Ron Han, Director of the Office of Veterans Services. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the concepts in House Bill 2489.

Funding for this position was submitted in the division's supplemental budget request but did not receive approval. If funding is not approved through this process, the State Office of Veterans Services may delay addressing women issues and programs.

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.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: mgolojuch@hotmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2489 on Mar 28, 2016 09:00AM*
Date: Thursday, March 24, 2016 9:51:37 PM

HB2489

Submitted on: 3/24/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 28, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Golojuch Jr	LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Yes

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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March 28, 2016

TO: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair

RE: HB 2489 Relating to the Department of Defense
Hearing: Thursday, March 28, 2016, 9:00 a.m., Room 211

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of HB 2489 Relating to the Department of Defense which proposes that funding be made available to the State Department of Defense for a veteran's services counselor position within the Office of Veterans' Services (OVS) with a primary focus on female veterans.

In 2013 the Hawai'i Military Women's Taskforce submitted a report to the legislature recommending that a Women's Veteran's Coordinator position be established in order to help address the unique needs of women in active duty and of women veterans, needs that are often different from those of their male counterparts. The coordinator will fill a gap in care and will aid with the process of helping the approximately 12,000 women veterans in Hawai'i to move forward in their lives. The coordinator would help the OVS to collect data, integrate services and move forward on the Task Force's recommendations.

As with other organizations where women are a distinct minority; programs and services were originally established and created for male populations. Those benefits and services have been designed to address the needs of men rather than women. Women need gender appropriate programs, benefits, and services; nowhere is this more evident than for healthcare services and for military sexual trauma, a result of sexual assault while in the military.

It is important to recognize the specific and distinctive needs of women in their effort to re-enter civilian lives, retrain for new careers, establish homes for themselves and their families, and to care for their families. Establishing a counselor position will help focus the OVS on gender appropriate, effective care for women

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls. It is because of this mission, the Women's Caucus supports this important measure.

We thank the committee for this opportunity to submit our testimony in support.



THE SEX ABUSE TREATMENT CENTER

A Program of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children

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Michael P. Matsumoto

Robert H. Pantell, MD

Gidget Ruscetta

Joshua A. Wisch

DATE: March 28, 2016

TO: The Honorable Jill Tokuda, Chair
The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: The Sex Abuse Treatment Center
A Program of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children

RE: Testimony in Support of H.B. 2489
Relating to the Department of Defense

Good morning Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

The Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC) supports H.B. 2489, which appropriates funds for the establishment of a veterans service counselor IV position within the Office of Veterans' Services to assist all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans.

Sexual assault in the armed forces remains a serious health and safety problem for both current and former service members in the State of Hawaii. As reported to the Legislature by the Hawaii Military Women's Taskforce (the Taskforce) in 2013, Military Sexual Trauma (MST) has lasting consequences for its survivors, and contributes to mental health problems, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, homelessness, and joblessness among our state's veteran population.

A recent national survey released by the US Department of Defense indicated that 26,000 service members were sexually assaulted in 2012. Of these, 12,000 (46%) were women, despite there being far fewer women in the military than men. This means that women in the armed forces are disproportionately subjected to sexual violence than their male counterparts, with 6.1% of the surveyed servicewomen responding that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact in 2012, compared with only 1.2 percent of men. Overall Veteran Affairs healthcare provider screenings further indicated that, in 2011, 23% of women veterans have experienced MST.

A Civil Beat analysis of incidents between 2004 and 2014 further found that an average of 119 sexual assaults of service members were reported in Hawaii each year. It is important to note that this does not reflect the actual number of military sexual assaults that likely occurred in the islands, as such attacks are vastly under reported.

The scale of MST in Hawaii, given the extent of the US military's presence in the islands, underscores the need for our state to provide appropriate resources to support veteran survivors of sexual assault, even after they leave service.

Unfortunately, an informal survey conducted by members of the Taskforce in 2014 found that Hawaii veterans still do not know what benefits they are entitled to or that services are available to address MST and PTSD, and continued to face difficulties accessing re-entry, employment and educational services and benefits.

By funding the veterans service counselor IV position in the Hawaii Department of Defense, H.B. 2489 would empower local veterans who suffered sexual assault during their time in service to access the resources they need to heal and recover, consistent with the Taskforce's recommendations to the Legislature. Moreover, the counselor would be able to identify and bridge gaps in care, and assist the Office of Veterans Services to improve MST service delivery throughout the State of Hawaii.

Therefore, we respectfully urge you to join SATC in supporting this important measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: mikegolojuch808@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2489 on Mar 28, 2016 09:00AM
Date: Thursday, March 24, 2016 4:56:01 PM

HB2489

Submitted on: 3/24/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 28, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Golojuch	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am in strong support of this bill. Another counselor with a focus on female veterans is definitely needed. Please pass this bill. Thanks, Mike Golojuch, Lt Col, USAF Ret.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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