

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1976

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 24 2023

RE: GOV. MSG. NOS. 553,
555

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred Governor's Message Nos. 553 and 555, submitting for study and consideration the nominations of:

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

G.M. No. 553 JUDY GUAJARDO,
for a term to expire 06-30-2025; and

G.M. No. 555 HOWARD LESSER,
for a term to expire 06-30-2025,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal histories, resumes, and statements submitted by Judy Guajardo and Howard Lesser for service on the State Rehabilitation Council.

JUDY GUAJARDO

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Judy Guajardo from the Department of Human Services.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Guajardo's professional experience, background, and desire to serve her community qualify her for appointment to the State Rehabilitation Council as a member representing Maui County and the Statewide Independent Living Council. Since 2014, Ms. Guajardo has been a Volunteer Coordinator at Nā Hoaloha, a

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nonprofit organization that provides care to seniors and individuals with disabilities in the County of Maui. Ms. Guajardo is also an active member in her community and currently serves as the Chair of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Hawaii, whose mission is to promote independent living and integration of persons with disabilities into the community, including assisting them in obtaining equal access to employment, social, economic, and political opportunities.

Your Committee finds that Ms. Guajardo's understanding of the needs of individuals with disabilities, knowledge on available resources and programs, expertise in assisting and advocating for individuals with disabilities, and dedication to public service will be great assets to the State Rehabilitation Council. Your Committee therefore recommends that Judy Guajardo be appointed to the State Rehabilitation Council based on her background, knowledge, and desire to contribute to the community.

HOWARD LESSER

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the reappointment of Howard Lesser from the Department of Human Services and Hawaii Disability Rights Center.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Lesser's experience, commitment to public service, and proven leadership on the State Rehabilitation Council qualify him to be reappointed to the State Rehabilitation Council as a member representing the client assistance program. Mr. Lesser has worked as an advocate for individuals with disabilities for over forty years and has distinguished himself with his dedication to this field. Mr. Lesser is currently a Senior Advocate at the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, which is the State's designated Client Assistance Program.

Your Committee notes that Mr. Lesser has been a member of the State Rehabilitation Council since 2016 and has served in various capacities, including serving as its Chair and Vice-Chair. Your Committee further notes that, although it finds Mr. Lesser to be qualified to serve on the Council, it appears that Mr. Lesser has already served the maximum two consecutive three-year terms allowed pursuant to section 348-8(a), Hawaii Revised Statutes, with no break in service. However, your Committee acknowledges that S.B. No. 313 (2023), which was passed by the Legislature and enrolled to the Governor, addresses this issue by amending section



348-8(a), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to exempt the member representing the Client Assistance Program from the Council's term limit. S.B. No. 313, if enacted as currently written, will take effect upon approval by the Governor.

Your Committee finds that Mr. Lesser's extensive experience and dedication as an advocate for individuals with disabilities, commitment to public service, and proven leadership will continue to contribute greatly to the State Rehabilitation Council. Your Committee therefore recommends that Howard Lesser be reappointed to the State Rehabilitation Council.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that are attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominees, has found the nominees to be qualified for the positions to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nominations.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



