

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **3377**

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 27 2024

RE: GOV. MSG. NOS. 560,
561, 562, 563

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred Governor's Message Nos. 560, 561, 562, and 563, submitting for study and consideration the nominations of:

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

G.M. No. 560	SANDRA JAKOB, for a term to expire 06-30-2026;
G.M. No. 561	SEAN KNOX, for a term to expire 06-30-2025;
G.M. No. 562	RAMON RUIZ, for a term to expire 06-30-2026; and
G.M. No. 563	VICTORIA KENNEDY, for a term to expire 06-30-2026,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal histories, resumes, and statements submitted by Sandra Jakob, Sean Knox, Ramon Ruiz, and Victoria Kennedy for service on the State Rehabilitation Council.

SANDRA JAKOB

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



Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Jakob's over twenty years of experience working with persons with disabilities as a vocational rehabilitation specialist in the private sector and desire to serve her community qualify her for consideration for appointment to the State Rehabilitation Council as a member who is a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs. Your Committee notes that Ms. Jakob earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Master of Education degree in Counseling and Guidance with a specialization in Rehabilitation from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and has been a certified rehabilitation counselor and licensed mental health counselor for over twenty years. Your Committee further notes that Ms. Jakob is a resident of the County of Hawaii and has been serving as a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist at PACBLU since 2003, assisting injured individuals in the State's workers' compensation system to adjust to their disability and return to work. Your Committee finds that Ms. Jakob's expertise in providing assistance to individuals with disabilities in identifying feasible vocational alternatives reflecting the change in their capabilities and achieving their goals will be a great asset to the State Rehabilitation Council. Your Committee therefore recommends that Sandra Jakob be appointed to the State Rehabilitation Council based on her background, knowledge, and desire to contribute to the community.

SEAN KNOX

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Sean Knox from the Department of Human Services and one individual.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Knox's twenty-five years of experience in providing job placement and employment services in the State and desire to serve his community qualify him for consideration for appointment to the State Rehabilitation Council as a member representing the State Workforce Development Council. Mr. Knox is currently the President, Chief Executive Officer, and Partner of Hawaii Employment Services Inc., doing business as HiEmployment, a position he has held since 2010. With offices located throughout the State, Mr. Knox oversees the recruitment, hiring, and placement of thousands of individuals every year, in various sectors across the State. Prior to his current position, Mr. Knox served as the President and owner of POI Employment LLC, a



professional employer organization that he established in 2005 to assist employers in Hawaii to secure temporary administrative and accounting professionals. Your Committee notes that Mr. Knox is an active member in community organizations, including serving as a member of the Kapiolani Community College Accounting Program Advisory Committee since 2003, and Hawaii Literacy, Inc.'s Board of Directors since 2007. Mr. Knox has also served on the State Workforce Development Council since 2016, in various positions including the Chair of its Performance Measurement Committee and Vice Chair of its Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee. Your Committee finds that Mr. Knox's experience in serving clients on both sides of employment - employers who seek temporary and permanent employees and individuals who seek employment - throughout the State in various industries will bring a unique and valuable perspective to the State Rehabilitation Council. Your Committee therefore recommends that Sean Knox be appointed to the State Rehabilitation Council based on his experience, knowledge, and desire to contribute to the community.

RAMON RUIZ

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

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Ruiz's professional experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify him for consideration for appointment to the State Rehabilitation Council as a representative of business, industry, and labor. Mr. Ruiz is a disabled combat veteran who retired from the United States Air Force after twenty-four years of service. Since 2014, Mr. Ruiz has been serving as an Employment Service Specialist for the Workforce Development Division of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. In this position, Mr. Ruiz provides services in coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and Veterans Employment Services at the American Job Center Hawaii on Oahu, including developing business relationships with various employers and recruiters with focus on the employment of disabled and other eligible veterans with a high emphasis on those who have significant barriers to employment, including those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, homeless, or previously incarcerated. Mr. Ruiz is also the owner of 808-Celular, LLC, a wireless plan wholesale and retail company he founded in 2014. Your Committee finds that Mr. Ruiz's expertise



and personal dedication to assisting veterans with disabilities will be great assets for the State Rehabilitation Council. Your Committee therefore recommends that Ramon Ruiz be appointed to the State Rehabilitation Council based on his experience, knowledge, and desire to contribute to the community.

VICTORIA KENNEDY

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the reappointment of Victoria Kennedy from the Department of Human Services.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Kennedy's over thirty years of advocating for individuals who are blind and visually impaired, desire to contribute to the community, and interest in serving the public qualify her for reappointment to the State Rehabilitation Council. Ms. Kennedy, having been legally blind since 1978, and totally blind since 2000, has been a strong advocate for those with disabilities with particular focus on blindness. Ms. Kennedy currently provides her services to the Guide Dogs of Hawaii, a nonprofit corporation founded in 1955, for the purpose of improving the quality of life for Hawaii's legally blind residents through the utilization of guide dogs, adaptive aids, and advocacy. Ms. Kennedy's responsibilities include giving presentations relating to guide dogs to service organizations and schools, and providing training to blind individuals on the use of assistive technologies such as iPhones and the Victor Reader Stream, a handheld digital media player that provides an opportunity for blind and visually impaired persons to listen to books, newspapers, music, and internet radio stations. Your Committee finds that Ms. Kennedy's first-hand experiences with blindness, educating and advocating for individuals who are blind, and her work for the legitimacy of service animals equip her with the knowledge that will continue to be great assets to the State Rehabilitation Council. Your Committee notes that Ms. Kennedy has been serving on the State Rehabilitation Council since 2021. Your Committee therefore recommends that Victoria Kennedy be reappointed to the State Rehabilitation Council based on her experience, knowledge, and desire to contribute to the community.

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



The Senate
 Thirty-Second Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Health and Human Services
HHS
Advise and Consent

Governor's Message No.:* 563	Committee Referral: HHS	Date: 3/1/24		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision				
The Recommendation is:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advise and Consent 2340	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Advise and Consent 2345			
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A. (C)	✓			
AQUINO, Henry J.C. (VC)	✓			
KEOHOKALOLE, Jarrett				✓
SHIMABUKURO, Maile S.L.	✓			
AWA, Brenton	✓			
TOTAL	4			1
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
Distribution:				
Original File with Committee Report	Yellow Clerk's Office	Pink Drafting Agency	Goldenrod Committee File Copy	

***Only one Governor's Message per Record of Votes**