

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3942

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 25 2024

RE: JUD. COM. NO. 26

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

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred Judiciary Communication No. 26, submitting for study and consideration the appointment of:

DISTRICT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

J.C. No. 26 MICHELLE N. COMEAU,
for a term to expire in 6 years,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Michelle N. Comeau for service on the District Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the appointment of Michelle N. Comeau from sixteen individuals.

Your Committee received comments on the appointment of Michelle N. Comeau from the Hawaii State Bar Association.

The Hawaii State Bar Association Board of Directors (HSBA Board) uses a rating system that considers several criteria to assist the HSBA Board in making a recommendation to your Committee on whether the appointee is "qualified" or "not qualified". Specifically, the criteria the HSBA Board employs is the same criteria found in the American Bar Association's Guidelines for Reviewing Qualifications of Candidates for State Judicial Office. Those guidelines include the following criteria, which are not exclusive: integrity, diligence, legal knowledge and ability, professional experience, temperament, financial responsibility,

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public service, and ability to fulfil the responsibilities and duties required of the position for which the applicant has been appointed. Upon review of the established criteria, the HSBA Board found the appointee to be qualified for the position of District Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Judge Comeau received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Dartmouth College, and her Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law, where she graduated magna cum laude. Judge Comeau has been licensed to practice law in the State of Hawaii since 2011.

Judge Comeau currently works as a Per Diem District Court Judge for the First Circuit, a position she has held since 2017. As a Per Diem Judge, Judge Comeau adjudicates misdemeanors, petty misdemeanors, criminal violations, restraining orders, summary possession, and limited jurisdiction civil claims. Judge Comeau also currently works as of counsel for Nakashima Ching LLC, where she advocates for organizations and individuals facing difficult legal disputes in federal and state courts in the State, with a focus on property law and other civil matters. Previously, Judge Comeau was an associate at Alston, Hunt, Floyd, and Ing and was a Law Clerk for the Honorable Susan Oki Mollway in the United States District Court for the District of Hawaii.

Your Committee notes that Judge Comeau is involved in the community. Judge Comeau presently serves on the Board of Directors for Residential Youth Services and Empowerment and is a Troop Leader for Girl Scouts of Hawaii Troop 861. Additionally, Judge Comeau serves on the Priest Search Committee for the Parish of St. Clements.

Testimony submitted in support of Judge Comeau's appointment commended her competence, compassion, courage, decisiveness, and ability to work well with others. Testimony submitted in support of Judge Comeau's appointment also noted that, through her years of experience as a Per Diem Judge, she has proven her abilities to perform at the highest level and will be able to immediately contribute to the efficiency and daily workings of the District Court.

Your Committee finds that, based on the testimony submitted on her behalf, Michelle N. Comeau has the experience, temperament, judiciousness, and other competencies required to be a District Court Judge, and has a good sense of where the equities, rights,



and responsibilities lie in a case, which is essential for a District Court Judge.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the appointee, has found the appointee to be qualified for the position to which appointed and recommends that the Senate consent to the appointment.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,

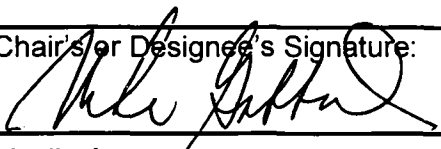


KARL RHOADS, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Second Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Judiciary
JDC
Consent

Gov. Msg./Jud. Com. No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
UC 26	JDC	04 22 24		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision				
The Recommendation is:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent 2347		<input type="checkbox"/> Not Consent 2349		
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
RHOADS, Karl (C)	✓			
GABBARD, Mike (VC)	✓			
ELEFANTE, Brandon J.C.	✓			
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A.		✓		
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 Message/Communication per Record of Votes