

March 28, 2024

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura  
Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**Re: Nomination to the Hawaii Children's Trust fund Advisory Board**

It is an honor to be nominated to the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board. Please see my written statement below that addresses your questions:

1. I wish to be a member of the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board because I am qualified to do the job. My own life experiences can help guide the board as tough decisions are faced. My time as a Social Worker IV at Child Welfare Service and Department of Health, both in case management positions and as a foster parent, emergency foster parent, legal guardian, and adoptive parent help qualify me in making decisions and asking difficult questions. As a case manager, I was able to get to know individuals, many of whom I still stay in contact with. I understand how having a child with mental health issues and developmental disabilities affect our lives as a parent, teacher, and community.

I have firsthand experience of being a parent (legal guardian) of a child with mental health issues. This experience has given me a clear understanding of the individualized needs of these children who will someday become adults in our communities.

2. I see the role and responsibilities of a member of the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund as attending board meetings, monitoring and assessing the development of the grant application process to ensure that we reach diverse communities and organizations, assisting with the review of grant applications and the selection of funded projects in an impartial and professional manner. Also, supporting the efforts of the Trust Fund whenever called upon, advocating for the Trust Fund, as needed and monitoring funds received by organizations receiving Trust Fund dollars.

I also see this role as an advocate for and support of children at risk for abuse and neglect through policy recommendations, advocacy, public awareness, and education.

3. I am qualified for this position because I have compassion and love for children. I also have a bachelors in Sociology, an associate in administration of justice and 21 years of Experience working for the State of Hawaii as a social worker.

I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Island of Hawai'i YMCA and oversee a budget of over \$1,000,000. I am proud to say that since I was appointed to this position in 2018, the YMCA's budget has gone from a deficit to a surplus.

I can manage money, manage staff, and problem solve difficult situations. I am extremely creative and love to do arts and crafts. I have found a new love in cooking.

My decision-making ability goes as far as doing what needs to be done, making tough decisions, and remaining focus on "the bottom line." Sometimes situations need to be explained to individuals in a way that they can understand, using local terms and examples.

I am not an expert in any area; however, I am a functional member of the Hilo community in the State of Hawaii, have experience with the State DHS and DOH systems, and have compassion and love for children at heart. My roots are deep in the community that I was born in, raised my children in and continue to live in. My family has been in Hilo for 5 generations.

4. I am not sure what I want to accomplish during my term of service. I do know that I want to do what is best for the children of Hawaii. I do know that each child is a precious gift from God and should not be in any shape or form hurt or damaged by any other living being. I will do my best based on the situations at hand. I will have a better understanding of what I wish to accomplish during my term after I've been able to get my feet wet at the meetings.
5. Four qualities that best describe me are creativity, understanding, patience, and fairness. These qualities would benefit the Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board as I have a creative mind, and love to think out of the box or

around the circle. I have an understanding heart and can recognize times to be empathetic and firm at the same time. I am not afraid to ask people to wait, or to ask for clarity, because at times I get confused, especially when issues do not add up correctly. I am patient, sometimes too much so that others get irritated. However, with my patience, I am sure to document and proceed carefully, so that matters are done correctly.

6. I am not sure what experience would make me stand out, I like to lay low, but be steadfast. I would like to know all the facts, and then proceed. I received an award for Remarkable Women 2023 by Nextel (KHON) Broadcasting for the State of Hawaii. I received that honor for the work I have been doing for the past 6 years at the Island of Hawaii YMCA. In a nutshell, the Y was on the verge of closing, there were numerous issues, low membership, inconsistencies in finances, employee issues, building issues, programming issues. I worked on one issue at a time, one wall at a time, one employee at a time, with no money. Now, six years later, the Y has 4K members strong, 1900 fitness center members programming for keiki to kupuna and moving strong and plowing forward. We are creating new programs, joining forces with other non-profits, applying for new and innovative programming, and building a bigger and better Y based on the needs of the community. I am proud of my staff and members.
7. Yes, I can foresee possible conflicts of interest that could arise during my service on the Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board. I would overcome these conflicts of interest by abstaining from voting or commenting on issues and requests pertaining to the Island of Hawaii YMCA, YMCA Oahu, Maui Family YMCA, and YMCA Kauai.

Mahalo for this opportunity to serve our community. Should you have any questions please contact me. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Mahalo,



Wendy S. Botelho-Cortez



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

March 29, 2024

TO: Health and Human Services Committee

FR: Greg Waibel  
President and CEO  
YMCA of Honolulu

RE: Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board Wendy Botelho-Cortez SUPPORT

I am in full support of nominee Wendy Botelho-Cortez. I have had the opportunity to work with Wendy as a colleague of mine over the past several years. Wendy is so committed to the keiki in our state and is a strong advocate for programs, services, and care that provides advancing youth and strengthening families. Wendy has brought many resources and programs to her community that provides for protection, safety, and support for kids that are at risk or experiencing abuse or neglect. Her perspectives and energy would be beneficial to Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board. She has real world experience in doing the work as well as experience in governance and advocacy to bring people and resources together to support our community and state.

**GM-670**

Submitted on: 3/29/2024 6:18:19 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Stivers-Apiki	Testifying for Hilo Y's Men & Women's Club	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As the Club President of the Hilo Y's Men and Women's Club, an affiliated community and international service club of the Association of Y's Men International, I support the nomination of **WENDY BOTELHO-CORTEZ** to the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board. As the CEO of the Island of Hawaii YMCA, she has demonstrated exceptional management skills in the overall operation of the YMCA. She has strong interpersonal skills that bring people of diverse backgrounds to work toward common goals.

Thank you for seriously considering Ms. Botelho-Cortez to the Trust Advisory Board.

**GM-670**

Submitted on: 4/1/2024 4:04:34 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Julie Tulang	Testifying for Zonta Club of Hilo	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

On behalf of the members of the Zonta Club of Hilo, I submit support of the appointment of Ms. Wendy Botelho to the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board. Wendy has been an active member of our community, advocating for the well being of people, especially children. Her work at the YMCA is a visual example of her dedication and love for the children of Hawaii.



HAWAI'I STATE  
COALITION AGAINST  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**LATE**

April 3, 2024

Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura  
Vice Chair Henry J.C. Aquino  
Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole  
Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro  
Sen. Brenton Awa

Re: GM670 Relating to Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

I respectfully submit this letter of support on behalf of Wendy Botelho-Cortez to the Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board. The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters. Ms. Botelho-Cortez is the CEO of the Island of Hawai'i YMCA (YMCA), one of our member programs.

Over the last several years, I have had the pleasure of working closely with Ms. Botelho-Cortez and her team at the YMCA and I attest to her passion and commitment to serving the families of Hawai'i. In addition to being a gathering place for youth on Hawai'i Island, the YMCA serves as a visitation center for court-ordered visitation, including families that have experienced domestic violence. She and her team work diligently to create a safe environment that promotes community healing.

At HSCADV's annual conference in 2022, Ms. Botelho-Cortez was recognized as the advocate of the year for her contribution to her community during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the height of the pandemic, the YMCA provided free childcare services for first responders and made its facilities available to community members.

Ms. Botelho-Cortez's years of experience and engagement in the community would be an asset to the Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board in addressing child abuse and neglect in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

**GM-670**

Submitted on: 3/29/2024 10:37:31 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Martha Rodillas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This testimony is to support the nomination of WENDY BOTELHO-CORTEZ to the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board. Wendy is passionate about what she does; she is committed and strives for the best outcome in every situation. She has remarkably improved the Island of Hawaii YMCA's membership, programs, staffing and financial status. Under her leadership, the YMCA has responded to the needs of the community especially during COVID-19. She activated the very first and one-of-a-kind First Responder's Distant Learning Day Camp for kids who's parents were essential workers during the pandemic. She is proud to say that at the height of the pandemic, this camp remained COVID free for 17 months!

Wendy will be a great asset to this Board. She is rooted in the community and cares about the kids, kupuna and the community at large.

I humbly submit this testimony in favor of WENDY BOTELHO-CORTEZ' nomination. Thank you!



**GM-670**

Submitted on: 3/29/2024 5:41:42 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Miyahira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wendy Botelho is the President of the Island of Hawaii YMCA. I have had the pleasure of serving on her board of directors and can confidently inform you that she is a responsible individual, fiscally oriented, and delivers programs that address the needs of our families in our communities. Of particular interest is the Family Visitation Center that Wendy inherited when she assumed the leadership role at the YMCA. Our FVC program attempts to help families that have suffered from the effects of domestic violence.

I support her appointment to the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board.

**GM-670**

Submitted on: 4/1/2024 7:12:01 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debbie Watson-Correa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear President Kouchi and Members of the Senate,

I would like to testify to agree with Governor Green's recommendation to appoint Wendy Botelho-Cortez to the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board. Wendy has advocated for children and their families in Hawaii for decades. Passionate for doing the right thing for Hawaii's families motivates her to serve in any capacity needed.

Wendy currently leads her team at the Island of Hawaii YMCA to positively impact the lives of our community. With her direction and commitment, she has been able to propel the organization to new heights. Everything she does is with the heart to serve the people and done with a smile. Continually taking the on new challenges and finding ways meet the needs of the community, programs at the Y have grown exponentially under her leadership.

With growth comes added responsibility and need for more resources, but with her creativity and commitment Wendy and her team have been able to fundraise and write grants to meet her vision. She is the point of the spear, pushing through to uncharted territory to press forward for the children and families. Dedicated, enthusiastic, leads with integrity and excellence, and passionate for Hawaii's families and their future makes Wendy Botelho-Cortez the ideal candidate for this position.

Thank you for considering my testimony. As a former foster parent, I have personally witnessed the need for programs to strengthen the family units and provide support to prevent child abuse and neglect. Our keiki are our future and I am thankful for the service of the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board, Committee and Appointed members.

Mahalo,

Debbie Watson-Correa

**GM-670**

Submitted on: 4/1/2024 10:07:52 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Loren Tsugawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the WENDY BOTELHO-CORTEZ to the board. I have known Wendy ever since she became the President/CEO of the Island of Hawaii YMCA in 2018. Through her leadership she has helped the YMCA grow and prosper which has ultimately served the community. She will be a great asset on the board.

Mahalo, Loren Tsugawa

**GM-670**

Submitted on: 4/1/2024 3:29:38 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lincoln Ashida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This testimony is submitted in strong support of the nomination of Wendy Botelho-Cortez to the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board. Wendy is one of the most remarkable leaders of the Big Island, and in the State of Hawaii. She has dedicated herself to serving our community in both the public (State of Hawaii) and private sectors. In her current position as Executive Director of the YMCA of Hawaii Island, she has raised her organization to new heights. In addition to providing numerous health-promoting activities to the Y membership, the Y's outreach to the community at large has been unprecedented. Raising funds to benefit the children of Lahaina, Maui so they can participate in the Merrie Monarch festival for the first time, providing hot meals to seniors, and hosting positive activities for our youth are just some of the recent yet typical projects the Y has undertaken under Wendy's leadership.

This Advisory Board is a perfect fit for Wendy. Who best knows the needs of Hawaii's children and the challenges they face, other than a leader who sees and lives this up close every day of her work life.

Based on the above reasons, and in due deference to the confirming authority of the HHS Committee, I would unqualifiedly recommend Wendy Botelho-Cortez for your consideration. Wendy possesses all of the professional and human qualities most admired in Hawaii leaders.

**GM-670**

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 11:25:48 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/3/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charlene Iboshi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in support for GM 670 –for Wendy Bothelo-Cortez to be part of the Hawai’I Children’s Trust Fund Advisory Board**

My name is Charlene Iboshi,an active community member on Hawaii Island. I have known Wendy Bothelo for over twenty years I have known her when we were building interagency systems on Hawaii Island and Statewide involving children, families, justice-involved offenders and Children Of Incarcerated Parents, and more. My role at the Office of the Hawaii County Prosecuting Attorney, as a Deputy, then First Deputy, then later as the Prosecuting Attorney, gave me an opportunity to work with Wendy in her many roles in the community. Now in retirement, I continue to work with Ms. Bothelo with my many community service organizations’ work.

As the CEO of the YMCA on Hawaii Island, Wendy Bothelo has demonstrated that she has clear understanding of how to build an organization’s program to support our community, including our keiki and families. She has demonstrated that she can build a team that knows how to build financial and program sustainability and expansion.

Ms. Bothelo has the skills, character and passion to be an excellent contributing member of the Hawai`i Children’s Trust Fund Advisory Board. Please confirm Ms. Bothelo.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support for Wendy Bothelo through GM 670.