

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 15 2025

RE: GOV. MSG. NOS. 568,
569, 570

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, to which was referred Governor's Message Nos. 568, 569, and 570, submitting for study and consideration the nominations of:

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS' SERVICES

G.M. No. 568 ARIS BANAAG,
for a term to expire 06-30-2028;

G.M. No. 569 BLAIR SUZUKI,
for a term to expire 06-30-2028; and

G.M. No. 570 MARY KAY HERTOOG,
for a term to expire 06-30-2028,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal histories, resumes, and statements submitted by Aris Banaag, Blair Suzuki, and Mary Kay Hertog for service on the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services.

ARIS BANAAG

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Major Aris Banaag from the Maui County Veterans Council and two individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Major Banaag's experience, knowledge, and proven leadership qualify him for appointment to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services as a



member representing Maui. Your Committee notes that Major Banaag currently serves as the Director of Operations of the Hawaii Air National Guard. He has served in the Hawaii Air National Guard continuously since 1995, holding various positions including Cyber Operations Officer and Medical Service Officer. He has worked as a Veterans Resource Center Coordinator from 2010 to the present, demonstrating his knowledge of veterans' issues and background in helping veterans to navigate the benefit system. In addition to his ongoing military service, Major Banaag also has extensive experience in the field of mental health counseling. He acted as a Personal Support Counselor at the University of Hawaii Maui College from 2008 to 2024 and worked as a Behavioral Specialist for the Department of Education from 2005 to 2008. Major Banaag is dedicated to community service pertaining to veterans' affairs and youth mentorship, and he deeply understands the Maui community. He has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of board members, and his institutional knowledge of veterans' matters, personal passion for uplifting veterans, and dedication to his community will continue to be assets to the Board. Your Committee therefore recommends that Major Aris Banaag be appointed to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services based on his professional accomplishments, track record of public service, and distinctive commitment to mental health awareness.

BLAIR SUZUKI

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the reappointment of Blair Suzuki from one individual.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Suzuki's experience, knowledge, and proven leadership on the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services qualify him for reappointment to the Board as a member representing the City and County of Honolulu. Your Committee notes that Mr. Suzuki currently serves as President and Chief Executive of Premier Restoration Hawaii. He has accrued diverse professional experience in business operations and management since 2015, having served as the Hawaii Operations Manager and General Manager of Otis Worldwide Corporation and as a Modernization Superintendent working on elevator systems across the State. Mr. Suzuki is also a veteran serving as a Nuclear Surface Warfare Officer in the United States Navy from 2008 to 2015, where he gained experience in leading casualty control procedures during real life emergencies. Your Committee further notes that Mr. Suzuki is an active member of



several local boards and organizations, including Housing Hawaii's Future, the GIFT Foundation, and Chamber of Commerce Hawaii, and currently serves as the Vice Chair of the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services. He has a thorough understanding of the role and responsibilities of board members, and his management skills from both his military and civilian careers, familiarity with the functions of the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, and lived experience as a veteran in the State will continue to be assets to the Board. Your Committee therefore recommends that Blair Suzuki be reappointed to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services based on his background, business acumen, and personal understanding of the needs of veterans.

MARY KAY HERTOOG

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the reappointment of Mary Kay Hertog from one individual.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Hertog's experience, knowledge, and proven leadership on the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services qualify her for reappointment to the Board as a member representing Kauai. Ms. Hertog retired in 2012 after almost thirty-four years of military service, and her final and most recent military assignment was as the Director of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office of the United States Department of Defense. As a career law enforcement officer in the Security Forces of the United States Air Force, she worked in many positions, including commanding several large Security Forces units, a technical training group, and one of the largest wings in the Air Force. Ms. Hertog was the first woman in the Air Force to be selected as the Director of Security Forces, headquartered at the Pentagon, and was also the first woman in the Air Force to command a Numbered Air Force. Beyond her military service, she has been a tireless advocate for veterans at both the local and national levels. Your Committee notes that Ms. Hertog currently serves as Kauai's representative to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, a member of the Kauai Police Commission, Commander of the Kauai Veterans' Council, and Adjutant for Kauai's Disabled American Veterans Chapter 5. Ms. Hertog has a thorough understanding of the role and responsibilities of board members and her ability to navigate government and military structures, familiarity with the functions of the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, and firsthand knowledge of the complexities surrounding veterans' healthcare, employment, and housing will continue to be



assets to the Board. Your Committee therefore recommends that Mary Kay Hertog be reappointed to the Advisory Board on Veterans' Services based on her experience, knowledge, and commitment to improving the lives of veterans.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs 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 Public Safety and
Military Affairs,



BRANDON J.C. ELEFANTE, Chair



