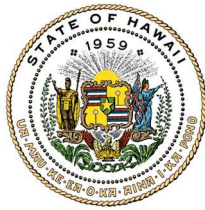


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
AND REHABILITATION**  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalu Kalaima  
a Ho'oponopono Ola*  
1177 Alakea Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**TOMMY JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

**Melanie Martin**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Pamela J. Sturz**  
Deputy Director  
Correctional Institutions

**Sanna Muñoz**  
Deputy Director  
Rehabilitation Services  
and  
Programs

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR MESSAGE NO. 619  
RELATING TO THE NOMINATION OF JENNIFER MERKLE  
TO THE HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY.

by  
Tommy Johnson, Director

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 5, 2025; 3:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Via Video Conference

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

I submit testimony in very strong support of the nomination and confirmation of Jennifer Merkle to the Hawai'i Paroling Authority (HPA), for a term ending June 30, 2028. Ms. Merkle has a diverse and wide-reaching work background in both the private and government sectors.

Ms. Merkle's work experience as a private attorney, business owner, assistant United States Attorney and Senior United State Attorney for the Federal Bureau of Prisons would add additional diversity to the membership makeup of the parole board.

She possesses the prerequisite knowledge, honed leadership and managerial skills, interpersonal, and decision-making skills required of members of the parole board.

I strongly urge the committee to recommend advice and consent for this qualified nominee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in very strong support of the Governor's Message No. 619 and Ms. Merkle.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
**HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY**  
*Ka 'Ākena Palola o Hawai'i*  
1177 Alakea Street, First Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

GENE DEMELLO, JR.  
INTERIM CHAIR

MILTON H. KOTSUBO  
JENNIFER M. MERKLE  
LINDA L. RICH  
LOUIS M. CHING  
MEMBERS

COREY J. REINCKE  
ADMINISTRATOR

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 619  
RELATING TO GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE JENNIFER M. MERKLE

By: Gene DeMello, Jr., Interim Chair  
Hawaii Paroling Authority

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 – 3:00 p.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 222 and Videoconference

Chair Elefante, Vice Char Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

I support Ms. Jennifer Merkle's confirmation to serve as a parole board member of the Hawaii Paroling Authority. She has served the board well since her interim appointment in May 2024. Her education and work experience as an attorney in federal and state jurisdictions and corrections, and as a consultant and university professor, provide the board with well-rounded experience to perform the parole board's quasi-judicial functions.

Ms. Merkle makes sound decisions and appropriately balances punishment and accountability with rehabilitation and re-entry opportunities. She is a valued member of the parole board, and I highly recommend her confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Governor's Message 619.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
**HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY**  
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LINDA L. RICH  
LOUIS M. CHING  
MEMBERS

COREY J. REINCKE  
ADMINISTRATOR

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 619  
RELATING TO GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE JENNIFER M. MERKLE

By: Corey J. Reincke, Administrator  
Hawaii Paroling Authority

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 – 3:00 p.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 222 and Videoconference

Chair Elefante, Vice Char Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

As the Administrator of the Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA), I am providing testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of Governor Green's nomination of Jennifer Merkle to serve as a member on the parole board with the Hawaii Paroling Authority.

Jennifer Merkle's experience as an attorney, her instructor/facilitator background and currently sitting on the parole board for the past several months would add an immense amount of experience as a member of the HPA.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Governor's Message for the confirmation of Jennifer Merkle as a member of the parole board.

**GM-619**

Submitted on: 2/27/2025 12:12:34 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/5/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alan Urasaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee members,

You cannot find a more qualified person for the HPA than Jennifer Merkle. I support the confirmation of this nominee.

Mahalo,

Alan Urasaki

February 28, 2025

Testimony of Dr. Alfonso Valdez, PhD

I have known candidate Jennifer Merkle for almost one year. We both work at the Hawaii Pacific University and teach classes there and assist students. When I was first hired I was kind of a sink or swim situation with a new learning management system and learning the procedures at a new job.

This is where I got to know Jennifer. She helped me with my first classes, controlling and learning the new learning management system and adapted to the online and campus environment. I moved to the island about two years ago for family members health. I am a tenured professor at the University of California Irvine and have been teaching there for over 19 years. Academia is my second profession I was a city police officer for 10 years for the Anaheim Police Department, California and a District attorney Investigator for the DA's office in Orange County. Academically I have been trained as a psychologist. My 30 years' experience, education and law enforcement training have allowed me a unique way to "size up another person.

I find that Jennifer is sincere and serious about contributions to the community. She is an excellent teacher and her students "love" her as they have told me many times. Her students have confided to me that she is "selfless" and always helps them no matter what day or time it is. As a license lawyer she uses her legal experience to bring a practitioners point of view to her teaching.

She is methodical in class preparation and speaks in an inviting demeanor. She is low key, but highly motivated and focused. We have spoken a few times about her prior temporary appointment experiences, not individual cases but the process and decisions the board has to make. She has indicated she loves the work and her experiences with parolee applicants has broaden her perspective and helped her home in on the focus on the parole board's function and duties.

I find that Jennifer is an honest and caring professional. I could not recommend a better candidate for a permanent position on the parole board. I have engaged with Jennifer on a social bases a few time. I know of no alcohol or drug consumption; she is a caring parent and a great colleague. I think and know that Jennifer will be a great ambassador for the state as a member of the parole board.

Respectfully submitted

  
Alfonso Valdez, PhD

Assistant Professor

College of Professional Studies

Hawaii Pacific University

[ajvaldez@hpu.edu](mailto:ajvaldez@hpu.edu)

mobile 909-730-7569

**Governor's Message No. 619 (GM 619)**

**GM-619**

Submitted on: 2/28/2025 4:44:38 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/5/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Thomas Brady, First Deputy Prosecuting Attorney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of Ms. Jennifer Merkle, nominated for the position of Board Member of the Hawaii Paroling Authority. I have known and worked with Ms. Merkle for over 10 years and cannot think of a better candidate for this position. I appreciate your time on this matter.

As a former Assistant U.S. Attorney with the U.S. Attorney's Office, my first contact with Ms. Merkle was in her capacity as the Assistant General Counsel at the Federal Detention Center, Honolulu, Hawaii. Ms. Merkle was smart, professional, amicable and tenacious.

I recently worked with Ms. Merkle in her capacity as an Assistant Professor at the Hawaii Pacific University. It was self-evident that Ms. Merkle was passionate about criminal justice and cared deeply for her students. In sum, Ms. Merkle is a consummate "public servant," and her critical thinking, adaptability, self-discipline, and communication skills will serve her well as a Board Member of the Hawaii Paroling Authority.

Jennifer Merkle has the intellect, temperament, and discipline to tackle the challenges that she will face as part of the Hawaii Paroling Authority, and will do so with grace and a smile.

**GM-619**

Submitted on: 3/3/2025 7:52:19 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/5/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Edmund "Fred" Hyun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai and Committee Members. My name is Edmund "FRED" Hyun and I support Governor Green's nomination for Jennifer Merkle to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Paroling Authority. As the former Chair, I had the benefit of working directly with the Nominee. Ms. Merkle's background and experience broaden's the Board's perspective in decision making.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony IN SUPPORT of the nominee.

**GM-619**

Submitted on: 3/3/2025 7:33:15 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/5/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Estela Derr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Estela Derr, and I have had the privilege of knowing Jennifer M. Merkle both professionally and personally since 2018, when we were both assigned at the Federal Correctional Complex in Victorville, California. I now have the honor to work with her as a colleague at Hawaii Pacific University.

This written testimony highlights Jennifer's professionalism, strong work ethic, commitment to public service, and compassion. Her impact has been significant at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as within our communities.

As a federal employee, Jennifer demonstrated unwavering commitment, expertise in policy development and implementation, and provided essential legal support. Her collaboration across departments was key to the success of institution operations, as well as ensuring enforcement of rights and protections for staff and inmates.

Beyond her role as a correctional worker, Jennifer has proven herself to be an advocate for marginalized populations, offering second chances to those who need them most. Her passion for serving the underserved members of our community is reflected in her continued involvement with programs that uplift and empower those facing hardship.

This commitment extends into her role as a Criminal Justice and Law professor at Hawaii Pacific University, where she has inspired students through her wisdom, insight, and unwavering dedication to fostering growth and learning. Jennifer's dedicated work in the classroom has provided students with the knowledge and tools to become responsible, empathetic leaders in the field of criminal justice.

No matter her role, whether as a legal professional or as an educator, Jennifer has been a tireless advocate for our community. Her selfless service has not only improved the lives of those she serves but has helped shape the future of criminal justice in Hawaii. It is without hesitation that I offer this testimony, confident that her continued work with the Hawaii Parole Authority and in all her endeavors will continue to make a profound and lasting impact.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this written testimony. It is truly an honor and privilege to know and work alongside someone as dedicated and passionate as Jennifer M. Merkle.





**GM-619**

Submitted on: 3/3/2025 11:24:14 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/5/2025 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Rich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Brandon Elefante, Chair; Senator Glen Wakai, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

My name is Linda Rich, I am currently an interim member of the Parole Board. I strongly support the appointment of Jennifer Merkle to the Hawaii Paroling Authority Board.

I have had the opportunity to work with Ms. Merkle for the past 10 months while we have been interim HPA board members. She has a wealth of experience and a passion for reducing recidivism. Having worked in corrections for many years and as an attorney, she has in depth knowledge criminality, the issue that the Board deals with daily, and the factors that help reduce the risk of recidivism. I believe she carefully weighs the public safety and the rehabilitation needs and opportunities available, seeking to make sound decisions. She is committed to contributing to a more rehabilitative approach to corrections, yet is clear about our responsibility to protect the public. I believe her character, knowledge and experience make her an ideal HPA Board member.

I urge you to approve Ms. Merkle's nomination.

Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Linda Rich