

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 9:33:04 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allen Cardines, Jr.	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

RE: Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) for District Family Court Judge

Dear Chair Roads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee of Judiciary:

It is an honor to write this letter **supporting** Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) for the District Family Court Judge position.

I'm a Sr. Pastor at Nanaikapono Church in Nanakuli, a Neighborhood Security Watch Coordinator, a Commissioner on the Hawaii State Commission of Fatherhood, and a mentor/father figure. I've been pastoring for over twenty years, dealing with Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs like physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect; and household dysfunctions like domestic violence, divorce, incarceration, substance abuse, mental illness, and more.

I met Rochelle and her Sexual Assault Unit back in 2023 when we were dealing with the increase in homicides, violence, sexual exploitations, and sexual assaults. Rochell and her team provided valuable information to provide protective factors to help treat and beat ACEs and create a safer, more caring community.

Rochelle is a dedicated public servant who has worked passionately to better our community for nearly three decades. As a parole officer, Rochelle balanced her desire to help those struggling with drug addiction, anger management issues, and mental health issues with her obligation to ensure public safety. Rochelle's twenty-one-year career as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and current position as the Sexual Assault Unit supervisor and Honolulu Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator speaks volumes of her extensive trial and courtroom experience, her leadership skills, and her ability to collaborate with various agencies to positively impact our community effectively.

Rochelle reflects the unique, diverse people she will serve as District Family Court Judge. Tethered to her humble roots, Rochelle will preside with compassion and integrity, working within the confines of the law to do the right thing.

I am happy to **support** Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) in her efforts to serve the public as a State of Hawaii District Family Court Judge.

Sincerely,

Allen Cardines, Jr

April 16, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I.
VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads:

I support wholeheartedly the nomination of Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha for District Family Court Judge for the First Circuit (Oahu). I have known Rochelle for approximately 23 years, when she was a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney at the Honolulu Prosecuting Attorneys Office, and through the years, when I entered the private practice of law and the Honolulu Liquor Commission.

I am most familiar with Rochelle's work as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney when I was the Chief of the Trials Division and supervised her as a trial deputy. Rochelle was an excellent and successful trial attorney, and those skills resulted in her promotion as a Supervisor – Team Captain of the Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Unit. In addition, she is one of the most experienced trial attorneys in the Prosecutor's Office. I know a little about her life story of growing up on the Waianae Coast and being accepted and attending Kamehameha Schools. Her quest to seek higher education by attending the William S. Richardson School of Law after serving as a Parole Officer for 9 years. She then joined the Prosecutor's Office in 2001. I believe these are remarkable qualities for a judge, because it shows commitment to public service and community.

I believe that Rochelle has the judicial temperament to be an excellent judge. Rochelle has the ability to make fair decisions in respectful judgment of others. In addition, she can comport herself appropriately, without losing her composure or equilibrium even under fire. She will make an excellent judge because she is honest, trustworthy, fair, and compassionate. Her moral courage is unquestioned and her integrity is impeccable.

In addition to all that Rochelle has accomplished, she is a devoted wife and mother of 2 boys Kuponu (17) and La'akea (15). I am confident Rochelle will be an excellent jurist and make sound decisions should you confirm her as a District Family Court Judge.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment on Rochelle's nomination.

Very truly yours,



Franklin Don Pacarro, Jr., Esq.

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 6:04:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melody Kaohu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to offer my strongest support for the nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit. Having had the privilege to work alongside Mrs. Vidinha, I am confident in her qualifications, experience, and character to serve as a judge on the bench.

Rochelle I. Vidinha is an exemplary attorney who brings extensive experience to the table, honed over years of practicing as a trial attorney. She has demonstrated a remarkable ability to handle complex legal matters with skill, precision, and a strong understanding of the law. Her extensive trial experience is an invaluable asset, and her deep knowledge of legal principles is apparent in every case she handles. Her dedication to protecting the community, particularly her advocacy for victims, sets her apart as an attorney with unparalleled commitment to justice.

Mrs. Vidinha's advocacy for victims in the community, particularly those affected by sex assault and human trafficking, speaks volumes about her character. As a zealous and compassionate advocate, she has worked tirelessly to support and empower vulnerable individuals, ensuring they receive the care, justice, and attention they deserve. Her passion for advocating for those who are often marginalized makes her an ideal candidate for the judiciary.

As a leader, Rochelle has demonstrated exceptional skills in managing her team. As the team captain of the Sex Assault and Human Trafficking Unit, she exhibited strong leadership and an unwavering commitment to justice. She has consistently shown the ability to work collaboratively, manage high-pressure situations, and lead her team to achieve favorable outcomes for victims and the community. Her leadership style is marked by humility, respect for others, and a deep commitment to ensuring that justice is delivered fairly and impartially.

What truly stands out about Mrs. Vidinha is her character. Despite her impressive professional accomplishments, she remains humble, grounded, and approachable. Her dedication to public service, her humility in leadership, and her consistent pursuit of justice make her a person of integrity and ethical standards. She possesses the qualities of a judge who will not only uphold the law but do so with empathy, fairness, and respect for all parties involved.

In conclusion, Rochelle I. Vidinha is a highly qualified and deserving candidate for the District Court of the First Circuit. Her vast legal experience, dedication to advocating for victims, strong leadership, and commitment to justice make her an ideal nominee. I wholeheartedly support her

nomination and respectfully urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to consider and confirm her to this important position.

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 8:03:15 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Shinsato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of Rochelle I. Vidinha's judicial confirmation. I have known Rochelle professionally for over 20 years and I have always respected her hard work and integrity. She has dedicated her life to public service. If given the opportunity, I believe she will preside with respect, dignity, compassion, and fairness. She embodies everything that can be expected from a member of the judiciary. I humbly submit my support for the judicial confirmation of Rochelle I. Vidinha.

April 15, 2025

Committee on Judiciary,

I highly recommend Rochelle Vidinha for Judge in the District Court of the First Circuit. I had known her since 2012 when I was a detective for the Honolulu Police Department's Sex Crimes Detail in the Criminal Investigative Division. She has always been knowledgeable, level-headed, and fair.

Rochelle is now the Team Captain for the sexual assault unit for the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, and I am now the Captain of the Violent Crimes Section of the Honolulu Police Department, Criminal Investigation Division. She has maintained her above-mentioned qualities and gained much more respect, and I know her own Deputy Prosecuting Attorneys highly respect her, too. She is the key reason why her team and HPD Sex Assault detail work well together, and she will be irreplaceable.

Thank you for considering Rochelle for a highly regarded position.

Captain Vince Legaspi
Honolulu Police Department
Criminal Investigation Division- Sex Crimes Detail
801 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
808-723-3716
vlegaspi@honolulu.gov

April 15, 2025

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF
ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

I'm proud to write this letter in support of Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha for the position of District Family Court Judge. My name is Elliot Mills, and I am the CEO of Hawaii Hospitality. I have known Rochelle for more than twenty years and can say without hesitation that with her combination of aloha and legal experience, Rochelle will be the fair and compassionate judge that our community deserves.

A local girl who grew up on the Waianae Coast, Rochelle has a true understanding of the challenges faced by the people in our community ... and the empathy which enables her to relate to, and communicate effectively with, people. Rochelle comes from a very close- knit family and was raised to treat everyone with kindness and respect. Rochelle instills these same qualities into her 2 young sons, stressing the importance of kindness and treating others as they would want to be treated.

Rochelle is a dedicated public servant who has worked passionately to better our community for more than three decades. As a parole officer, Rochelle balanced her desire to help those struggling with drug addiction, anger management issues, and mental health issues, with her obligation to ensure public safety. Rochelle's twenty-three year career as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, and current position as the Sexual Assault Unit supervisor and Honolulu Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator speaks volumes of her extensive trial and courtroom experience, her leadership skills, and her ability to effectively collaborate with various agencies to positively impact our community.

Rochelle's is a reflection of the unique, diverse people that she will serve as Circuit Court Judge. Tethered to her humble roots, Rochelle will preside with compassion and integrity, and will work within the confines of the law to do the right thing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. Mills', written over a white background.

Elliot Mills

April 15, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair, Vice-Chair Mike Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

We, the Akim Ohana of Makakilo, are in STRONG SUPPORT of ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA for the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

As the Team Captain of the Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Unit, Rochelle has tirelessly collaborated with law enforcement, federal and state agencies, non-profit service providers, and our local communities to take a stand against trafficking in our islands. She has given all these entities a seat at the table, including survivors, to determine the best course of action for each case that arises. Rochelle operates with a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach, ensuring that the needs of victims come first. She passionately champions the cause of giving victims not just a voice but also renewed hope for a brighter future. Her relentless pursuit of justice sends a clear message: sexual assault, trafficking, and related offenses will not be tolerated, nor will they be perpetuated in our local communities.

We vividly remember attending a crucial session at our local church in Nanakuli on a Saturday. Rochelle, a proud Waianae resident, and her dedicated team enlightened us about the grim realities of child trafficking, sex trafficking, and kidnapping—issues that often remain concealed within families. Their training empowered us to recognize these crimes and understand the vital steps for reporting them. In partnership with Ho'ōla Nā Pua, an organization we wholeheartedly support, Rochelle has not only helped survivors; she has transformed them into victorious advocates for change. We confidently endorse Rochelle I. Vidinha's appointment to the District Family Court of the First Circuit because it is timely, pivotal, and imperative for building a safer future for Hawaii. We stand with her against sexual assault and human trafficking and strongly support justice for those who have suffered greatly because of these crimes.

Sincerely,

Joseph-paul K.K. Akim and Carm Celine R. Akim

Community Volunteers, Makakilo-Nanakuli

April 15, 2025

RE: JC 31 — Testimony in Support of the Nomination of Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano)
Hearing Date: April 23, 2025, at 9:15 a.m. — Conference Room 225

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

It is an honor to write this letter in support of Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) for the position of District Family Court Judge. Having had the privilege of working alongside Rochelle in the fight against human trafficking, I have witnessed firsthand her unwavering commitment to justice, her ability to bring people together, and her deep respect for those she serves —both within and outside the legal system.

While serving as the Statewide Human Trafficking Abatement Coordinator with the State of Hawai'i Department of the Attorney General, I met Rochelle through her role as the Honolulu County Human Trafficking Task Force (HCHTTF) Coordinator. Together, we collaborated on a human trafficking awareness training for financial institutions. From the outset, Rochelle approached this work with intentionality, consistently aiming for meaningful, high-quality outreach. What truly set her apart was her ability to handle difficult conversations with grace and focus. Rather than reacting defensively to critiques about the challenges in trafficking prosecutions, she embraced the opportunity to educate. Rochelle fostered understanding by clarifying the complexities of the issue without undermining the integrity of the system.

Despite the immense responsibility of leading the Sex Assault Team, Rochelle devoted time to HCHTTF initiatives without compensation. Her dedication was both selfless and inspiring. When I learned of an opening for a Research and Data Analyst position within the Task Force, I eagerly joined her team, confident that her leadership would be nothing short of transformative.

Rochelle's commitment to justice extends far beyond the courtroom. As HCHTTF Coordinator, she led not just by coordinating from behind a desk, but by actively engaging with the community. Whether presenting to residents in Wai'anae, attending town hall meetings, participating in panels, or supporting local events, Rochelle was always there—no matter how busy her schedule—putting her time and energy into direct outreach. She was never one to ask "why"; she simply showed up, ready to make a difference. Her dedication to outreach reflects a level of service that goes above and beyond her official duties.

Through her leadership, Rochelle has fostered collaboration where others saw division, uniting law enforcement, service providers, and survivors. Her years as a prosecutor are invaluable, yet it is her willingness to learn and evolve with the needs of trafficking victims that sets her apart. She understands that their long-term recovery is paramount, and with genuine compassion, she consistently prioritizes connecting them to the resources they need for stability and long-term recovery.

Rochelle's balance of legal expertise and empathy makes her uniquely suited for the bench. She seeks not only accountability but also dignity for all involved, especially survivors. Her ability to listen, adapt, and approach each case with an open mind is exactly what is needed in a judge.

Rochelle's leadership has transformed the work she does into a true public service. I wholeheartedly support her appointment and have full confidence that she will serve the people of Hawai'i with the same professionalism, compassion, and commitment she has demonstrated throughout her career.

Sincerely,

Lindsey K. Amina



William A. Harrison
william@harrisonlawcenter.com
www.harrisonlawcenter.com
Tel: (808)523-7041

American Savings Bank Tower
1001 Bishop Street, Suite 2828
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813
Fax: (808)538-7579

April 15, 2025

Via Web: www.capitol.hawaii.gov/submittestimony.aspx

SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Chair: Sen. Karl Rhoads

Vice Chair: Sen. Mike Gabbard

DATE: Monday, April 23, 2025

TIME: 9:15 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Hearing for Consideration and Confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

Dear Honorable Senators: Karl Rhoads, Mike Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

I am writing to you on behalf of Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha, Esq., who has been nominated by Chief Justice Mark E. Recktenwald to fill a judicial vacancy in the District Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai'i.

For the last 44 years, I have practiced law with a focus on criminal defense. I have known Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha, Esq., since approximately 2003, shortly after she began her career as a Deputy Prosecutor. I was genuinely pleased to learn of her appointment to the District Court judgeship, as I believe she would serve with distinction and make an outstanding judge.

Over the years, I have worked with Rochelle on numerous cases, including jury trials. Through these professional interactions, I have gained a clear sense of how she would approach her responsibilities on the bench. Rochelle is exceptionally intelligent, possesses unwavering integrity, and approaches her work with thoughtfulness and respect. She is not swayed by personal biases and is always open to hearing differing viewpoints. I have never seen her act in anger or speak in a condescending manner.

Rochelle also brings a unique and valuable perspective to the judiciary. Her academic background in psychology and sociology, coupled with her experience working with Hawai'i's parole system, will undoubtedly enrich her understanding and approach to sentencing and rehabilitation.

Beyond her legal work, Rochelle is deeply civic-minded. She has long been active in her community, volunteering with Special Olympics, serving as a coach, referee, and den mother, and earning recognition as a Hall of Fame Inductee for my alma mater WSRSL's iconic "Ete Bowl."

Having served as a member of the Judicial Selection Commission, I always refer to Rule 11 of the Commission's Rules, which outlines the essential qualities for judicial candidates: integrity, moral courage, legal ability, experience, intelligence, compassion, fairness, diligence, decisiveness, and judicial temperament. Rochelle exemplifies each of these qualities.

Above all, the most critical attribute I seek in a judicial candidate is a demonstrated commitment to ensuring that every individual who appears in court is treated with fairness and respect. I have no doubt that Rochelle will uphold this fundamental principle.

In short, I wholeheartedly and without reservation recommend Rochelle 'Iwalani Vidinha for confirmation as a District Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Sen. Karl Rhoades
Sen. Mike Gabbard
April 15, 2025
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Please feel free to contact me should you require any additional information or further elaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William A. Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

William A. Harrison

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 8:54:12 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Bitanga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 21, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

Aloha Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair,

May this letter be received in support of Rochelle ‘Iwalani Vidinha for the position of District Court of the First Circuit Judge. My name is Tammy Bitanga and I am currently in the roll of Ho’ola Na Pua’s Director of Community Engagement at Pearl Haven, Specialized Residential Treatment Facility, and Advocate for Survivors of Human Trafficking. Being a CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children) Survivor myself has given me a unique opportunity to work closely with Rochelle since she became the Honolulu County Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator and am confident that Rochelle will be the fair and compassionate judge.

As the Task Force Coordinator, Rochelle worked in close collaboration with state and federal law enforcement, other state entities including Child and Welfare Services, Juvenile Probation, and Girls Court, and government and non-profit service providers, to battle trafficking in our community. Rochelle has brought the survivor voices to the table which is very important to assist in the serving of this population. We are now able to develop excellent relationships with the various stakeholders and has engaged in community outreach events to inform and educate our community about human trafficking.

Rochelle is an excellent communicator who has made herself available to task force members as we work together to develop victim-centered policies and protocols. Being raised in Hawai‘i she understands the challenges faced by the people in our community and has dedicated the nearly 30 years as a public servant helping children and vulnerable adults.

As a parole officer, Rochelle balanced her desire to help those struggling with drug addiction, anger management issues, and mental health issues, with her obligation to ensure public safety. Rochelle's twenty-one year career as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, and current position as the Sexual Assault Unit supervisor and Honolulu Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator speaks volumes of her extensive trial and courtroom experience, her leadership skills, and her ability to effectively collaborate with various agencies to positively impact our community.

Please feel free to reach out to me should you have any concerns,

cel: 808.221.0015 email: tammybitanga@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Tammy Bitanga

JC-31

Submitted on: 4/16/2025 7:10:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/23/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia J Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: APRIL 23, 2025, 9:15 AM, Conference Room 225

Aloha Senator Rhoads,

It is with great honor and a privilege to provide this letter in support of Rochelle ‘Iwalani Vidinha (Cusamano) for the position of District Family Court Judge. My name is Malia J. Smith. I was a professor and former Assistant Dean at Hawai‘i Pacific University and am currently the owner of MKM Properties, Sustainable Ideation, LLC, which manages a 20-acre regenerative food farm, Ai Love Nalo Restaurant and ‘Ai Love Health, LLC, which offers health and nutrition classes and meal plans for Native Hawaiians who are struggling with obesity, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. I have known Rochelle for more than 42 years, and I can say without hesitation that her strong character and values, fortitude, and professional experience are the kūkulu (foundation) that will make her a pono, fair, and compassionate judge that our community needs and deserves.

I met Rochelle during our 7th-grade year at Kamehameha Schools. We both hail from the west side of O‘ahu, with me from Nānākuli and Rochelle from Wai‘anae. Growing up, we saw firsthand the numerous challenges faced by our community, such as drug addiction, child abuse, domestic violence, crime, and homelessness. On many occasions, I recall our conversations about these types of issues, and Rochelle always said, “Sometimes good people do bad things.” And she consistently reminded me that although it is necessary to hold people accountable for their actions, it is equally important that we fulfill our kuleana by listening, having compassion, and helping when at all possible. Therefore, it was no surprise when she decided to become a public servant and engage the judicial system.

Rochelle has dedicated her entire life serving our community. First, as a parole officer, she worked tirelessly for almost 9 years to help guide those who struggled with drug addiction,

mental health, and anger management challenges while balancing her compassion for her clients with ensuring the safety of our community. Then, for the past twenty-one years, Rochelle has worked passionately as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and is now the Sexual Assault Unit supervisor and Honolulu Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator, which clearly exemplifies her excellent leadership and communication skills, extensive trial and courtroom experience, and her capacity to work effectively with affiliated agencies. She has been so effective in her role and is highly respected by her colleagues insomuch that she recently received the distinguished 2024 Outstanding Woman Lawyer Award by the Hawai‘i Women Lawyers organization.

Her lifetime experience working on both sides of the aisle, first as a parole officer helping parolees effectively transition back into society to a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney who holds people accountable for their actions, she intimately understands what it takes to be fair, honorable, and lawful. Reflecting on our past conversations, Rochelle has always stayed true to her convictions. Throughout her career and lifetime, she has fortified her prescient sentiment of “sometimes good people do bad things” by listening, having compassion, and helping when possible while fulfilling her kuleana to protect and honor all people.

Through her humble beginnings, education, and professional experience, she undoubtedly will preside with strength, intelligence, empathy, and probity bound by the marks of the law. Thus, with confidence and certitude it is truly an honor to provide this testimony in support of Rochelle’s nomination for District Family Court Judge.

If you have any questions or want to discuss Rochelle’s qualifications further, please contact me at 808-721-2174 or 808-799-9727.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,

Malia J. Smith, EdD

Owner/CEO

Sustainable Ideation, LLC

‘Ai Love Health, LLC

MKM Properties

April 17, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, APRIL 23, 2025, 9:15 am, Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads,

It is an honor and privilege that I write this letter in support of Rochelle Iwalani Vidinha (Cusumano) for the position of District Family Court Judge. As her younger sister, I have had the unique privilege of watching her positively impact the lives of others with her intelligence, compassion, and innate people skills.

Rochelle is proud of her humble upbringing along the beautiful Waianae coast. We were raised in an intact middle-class home by two hard working and loving parents. Our parents modeled and instilled in us the values of hard work, family first, and respect. We had nightly family dinners and experienced love and support from our parents (who by the way, just recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary). The safety and security we were blessed with was often a stark contrast to the social and economic problems that afflicted many in our community: drug addiction, broken families, poverty, domestic violence, and criminal activity, to name a few.

It wasn't uncommon to hear our neighbor's cry for help as her drug addicted boyfriend beat her or for Rochelle to comfort a friend whose childhood was torn apart by witnessing her mother being abused by her alcoholic father. Sadly, we often had a front row seat to the social challenges that significantly impacted families in our neighborhood and broader community. Although these were harsh realities to witness, they have helped to shape Rochelle into the woman and professional that she is today. Throughout her 33 years of public service, she earned the respect of those that she supervised as a Parole Officer, as well as the many individuals and agencies she's partnered with as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney. Rochelle holds everyone accountable for their actions and strives for justice; however, she also understands the importance of helping broken people become whole again, not only for the sake of that individual, but also for the greater good of the community and Hawai'i.

Throughout her life, it's been awe-inspiring to witness Rochelle's intelligence beautifully dance with her uncanny ability to connect with people. I am confident that her life's journey has prepared her with all of the personal attributes and legal expertise necessary to make her an excellent, fair, and just District Family Court Judge.

Sincerely,
Elise L. Rego

April 16, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: JC 31, Testimony In Support of Nomination of Rochelle I. Vidinha
HEARING: April 23, 2025, Wednesday, 9:15 am, Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads:

It is an honor to write this letter in support of Rochelle I. Vidinha for the position of District Family Court Judge. She has been a public servant since 1989 starting her career working as a parole officer with the State of Hawaii, Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA) under the Department of Public Safety and up through the ranks at City & County of Honolulu, Prosecutors Office as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney.

I know Rochelle very well, having worked together at HPA for almost nine (9) years. Her humble beginnings as a parole officer gave her a unique opportunity to apply her communication skills working directly with adult male/female parolees at the back end of the Criminal Justice System. She prepared release plans that best served the parolee, community, and victims; referred parolees to community services that specifically targeted their individual needs; and effectively communicated her intentions by listening with empathy, setting a focused agenda, evoking a response, and getting the parolee to commit to the plan. When those practices failed, she would then assess the risk to public safety or to the parolee themselves by issuing a warrant of arrest to reincarcerate; participated in the probable cause hearings process; and testified in front of the full parole board, parolee, witnesses, and their defense attorney for parole revocation hearings.

Rochelle has since developed a great deal of trial experience, trial strategy, and legal analysis during her twenty-three (23) year tenure as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and has gained expertise in negotiating appropriate case settlements as an alternative to trial. With her knowledge of the law, Rochelle has been assigned to serve as Team Captain in the Sexual Assault Unit where she specializes in the prosecution of Adult and Child Sex Crimes. She previously prosecuted general felonies ranging from theft to murder.

Rochelle has always displayed a passion for justice and is relentless in her efforts to ensure it prevails. She exhibits a high degree of energy toward her work, compassion for the victims, and an unimpeachable ethical standard that will serve her well as a District Family Court Judge.

I am very pleased to support Rochelle Vidinha in her efforts to serve the public as a State of Hawaii District Family Court Judge.

Sincerely,

Kevin Rego

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025

Time: 9:15 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

From: Anne E. Perreira-Eustaquio

Re: J. C. 31; Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Rochelle I. Vidinha

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I am honored to submit this testimony in strong support of J. C. 31, nominating Rochelle Vidinha for District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

While I have not had the opportunity to work with Rochelle directly in a professional setting, I have followed her impressive legal career with pride and admiration. As her cousin, I have always known Rochelle to be a woman of integrity, intelligence, and unwavering dedication to her community. Her professional accomplishments reflect her strong work ethic, sound judgment, and commitment to justice—qualities that are vital for anyone serving on the bench.

Rochelle has always exemplified compassion, fairness, and humility in both her personal and professional life. She is deeply rooted in her family and community, and she approaches every situation with empathy and a genuine desire to help others. These qualities, combined with her extensive experience and understanding of family law, make her exceptionally well-suited for the Family Court.

Chief Justice Recktenwald's nomination of Rochelle is a testament to the high regard in which she is held by the legal community. I have no doubt that she will bring the same level of professionalism, fairness, and care to the bench that she has demonstrated throughout her career.

I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Rochelle Vidinha as a District Family Court Judge. Mahalo for the opportunity to offer my heartfelt support for this outstanding nominee.

SING & ENRIGHT, LLP

A LAW CORPORATION
707 RICHARDS STREET
PENTHOUSE 1
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

CHRISTIAN ENRIGHT
christian@enrightlawhawaii.com

TEL: (808) 302-8085
FAX: (808) 523-9137

April 17, 2025

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chairperson
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 Beretania Street, Conference Room 016
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: **JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE VIDINHA
HEARING: APRIL 23, 2025, 9:15 am, Conference Room 225**

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express my strong support regarding the appointment of Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Rochelle Vidinha to the District Court of the First Circuit. I have known DPA Vidinha for nearly two decades both during my 16-year tenure as a Deputy Public Defender and now as a private practitioner. She did not ask me to submit this letter. When I heard that she was a candidate for this position, I asked her if I could write on her behalf.

Rochelle is tasked with the prosecution of the most emotionally, heartbreaking and mentally taxing class of offenses that are litigated in the criminal justice system. I have represented several defendants whom she prosecuted and my comments are based on my personal experiences with her in this professional capacity. Rochelle consistently conducts herself in a fair, honest and respectful manner. She is a zealous and diligent advocate for every one of her complainants.

Over the years, I have gained tremendous respect for her as I've come to know her not just as a prosecutor but also as an individual. I consider her to be a friend despite our adversarial roles in the courtroom. Rochelle is a rare type of person – tough and formidable yet humble and compassionate. If given the opportunity, Rochelle will be an excellent judge and our community will continue to benefit from her service.

Respectfully,

/s/ Christian Enright
CHRISTIAN ENRIGHT

April 18, 2025

The Honorable Karl Rhoads
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: JC 31 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the
District Family Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee,
ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA, for a term to expire in 6 years

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, April 23, 2025
TIME: 9:15 AM
PLACE: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I highly recommend Rochelle I. Vidinha, for District Family Court of the First Circuit.

I have known Rochelle for many years, she is very well-liked and well respected. I find her to be of the highest ethical and moral character. Rochelle is very hardworking and very dedicated in everything she does.

Rochelle would make an excellent District Family Court Judge. Rochelle's honesty, integrity, intelligence, demeanor, and strength in character would be a great asset to the Court. The Court needs someone like Rochelle who understands and cares. Rochelle will be able to make the hard and right decisions.

I give Rochelle my highest recommendation.

Very truly yours,



Jo Carreiro

Date: April 19, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: JC31, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit,
Judicial Nominee, Rochelle I. Vidinha

Hearing: Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 9:15 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225
415 South Beretania Street

It is my honor to write this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Judicial Nominee, Rochelle I. Vidinha as judge for the District Court of the First Circuit. I have known Ms. Vidinha since 2005, when I served as a law clerk at the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

Ms. Vidinha possesses the characteristics and skills necessary to be an excellent judge. She is intelligent and has a strong knowledge of criminal law. Ms. Vidinha is professional with everyone she encounters whether she is speaking to a judge or speaking to a member of the community. She treats everyone with dignity and respect regardless of status. I have never witnessed Ms. Vidinha behave or speak in an inappropriate manner.

Over the years, as a Deputy Public Defender for the State Office of the Public Defender, I have represented defendants in numerous felony cases in which she has been the assigned Deputy Prosecuting Attorney. What I appreciate about Ms. Vidinha is though she is a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, she sees the humanity in defendants. She is tough, but reasonable.

Ms. Vidinha is a fighter for the complaining witnesses in her cases, yet she is willing to work towards resolving cases in a way that is fair for all involved. She is collaborative when necessary and steadfast when needed. She has a great disposition and temperament. My dealings with her have always been pleasant.

Even though we are in an adversarial system, Ms. Vidinha understands the meaning of the word justice. She understands that justice balances the interests of the complaining witness with the rights of the accused. This is why I believe she will make an exceptional judge. In her legal practice, Ms. Vidinha consistently demonstrates she has the characteristics and skills necessary to be an effective judge.

Again, I strongly support the confirmation of Judicial Nominee, Rochelle I. Vidinha as judge for the District Court of the First Circuit. If selected, Ms. Vidinha will be a positive reflection of the Hawaii State Judiciary.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony in support of Judicial Nominee Rochelle I. Vidinha.

Respectfully,

/S/OKECHUKWU AMADI

Okechukwu “Okie” Amadi
Deputy Public Defender
State of Hawaii

April 20, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF ROCHELLE VIDINHA
TO SERVE ON THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT**

Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I write to express my **strong support of Rochelle Vidinha** to be confirmed to serve on the District Court of the First Circuit.

I first met Ms. Vidinha seven years ago when I began working at the Honolulu Department of the Prosecuting Attorney. As a new prosecutor, I admired her for handling sexual assault cases, among the most professionally and personally challenging cases a prosecutor can have.

After a time, my office was moved near Ms. Vidinha's. Being just down the hall, I heard how thoughtfully she counselled victims and how carefully she considered issues of particular cases. I saw first-hand the time and effort that she put into preparation, preparation that became obvious whenever I saw her in the courtroom. I recall always being impressed with her calm, competent, and able handling of whatever matter she appeared for.

Ms. Vidinha would bring a thoughtfulness and deliberation to the bench that would benefit everyone who came to her courtroom and our whole community.

I fully support Rochelle Vidinha to serve on the District Court of the First Circuit. I ask the Committee to send her nomination to the full Senate for speedy confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Thomas J. Michener, Esq.

April 20, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 31, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF ROCHELLE I. VIDINHA

HEARING: Wednesday, 9:15 A.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Senator Rhoads and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

It is an honor to provide this testimony in strong support of Rochelle Vidinha for the position of District Family Court Judge. Her deep connection to the community, remarkable ability to engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and unwavering compassion and empathy make her an ideal candidate. These qualities will undoubtedly allow her to serve as a fair and effective judge, positively impacting lives while protecting those who are most vulnerable.

I have had the privilege of knowing Rochelle for nearly 50 years, having grown up alongside her and her family in Waianae. Throughout her life, she has exemplified respect, thoughtfulness, and grace. Rochelle distinguished herself among her peers, demonstrating leadership through her intelligence, warm demeanor, integrity, and honorable character. Having grown up in a community affected by poverty, drug addiction, and domestic violence, she developed a profound understanding of hardship. This experience has shaped her unique perspective that enables her to advocate for victims while also providing a catalyst for meaningful change in the lives of others.

Rochelle's commitment to public service is evident in her distinguished career. From her early years as a parole officer to her tenure as a deputy prosecuting attorney, she has established herself as a principled yet compassionate professional. While she firmly upholds accountability, she also recognizes that consequences can foster transformation and growth. Her upbringing has shaped her perspective—while adversity is inevitable, perseverance and dedication pave the way for success. Rochelle has already made invaluable contributions to the Hawai'i judicial system, and in this role, she will have an even greater impact on the lives of those she serves. Without a doubt, she is the ideal candidate for this position, and she will continue to serve the people of Hawai'i with compassion and integrity.

Sincerely,
Tanya Enrico

In Support of Rochelle I. Vidinha
Judicial Nominee
District Court of the First Circuit

This is in support of the appointment of Rochelle I. Vidinha to the District Court of the State of Hawaii.

I have known Ms. Vidinha since she was a student in one of my classes at the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawaii. She was an outstanding student in many ways. Not only was she an active participant and strong student, she was always prepared and enthusiastic about the class and learning everything she could.

She remained that way as she entered law practice and has committed to public service for the last 30 plus years as a lawyer. She has consistently chosen public service as she progressed in law.

I have encouraged her to apply for a judgeship because I believe she has the intelligence, integrity, dedication and strength to contribute highly to the Judiciary and ask you to give her your full consideration.

Thank you.