

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

3431

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 06 2026

RE: JUD. COM. NO. 25

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred Judiciary Communication No. 25, submitting for study and consideration the appointment of:

DISTRICT COURT OF THE THIRD CIRCUIT, ISLAND OF HAWAI'I

J.C. No. 25 ANDREW MICHAEL KENNEDY
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 Andrew Michael Kennedy for service on the District Court of the Third Circuit, Island of Hawai'i.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the appointment of Andrew Michael Kennedy from the Office of the Public Defender, West Hawai'i Bar Association, and thirty-one individuals.

Your Committee received comments on the appointment of Andrew Michael Kennedy 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, public service, and ability to perform 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 Third Circuit, Island of Hawai'i.

Mr. Kennedy attended Villanova University where he received a Bachelor of Arts in 1999. He received his Juris Doctor from the Suffolk University School of Law in Boston, Massachusetts. Mr. Kennedy also attended Magdalen College at the University of Oxford, where he received a certificate of completion in Criminal Procedure and Property Law in 2001. Mr. Kennedy has been licensed to practice law in Hawai'i since 2012 and is also licensed to practice in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York.

Since 2018, Mr. Kennedy has been a Partner at Schlueter, Kwiat & Kennedy LLP, where he has an active trial practice and has tried cases ranging from assault to murder and public corruption. Mr. Kennedy has been practicing law for over twenty years in four states, where he has gained experience in civil and criminal litigation. Mr. Kennedy has also argued before the Hawai'i Supreme Court several times, and notably had a life sentence for attempted murder overturned in the case of *State v. Lauvao, et. al.*, 151 Hawai'i 430 (2022). Before becoming a Partner at Schlueter, Kwiat & Kennedy LLP, Mr. Kennedy was a Deputy Public Defender for the Office of the Public Defender for four years.

In addition to his legal practice, Mr. Kennedy uses his legal expertise to better his local community and serve the public. He has served as President and Vice President of the West Hawai'i Bar Association for several years and is currently the Director of the Hawaii State Bar Association representing the West Hawai'i constituency. Mr. Kennedy has also served as an Attorney Delegate for the District of Hawai'i for the United States District Court annual conference since 2021, has assisted as a faculty member for the State's Public Defender Seminar, is a Defense Bar Representative for the Hawai'i Criminal Law Jury Instructions Committee, and is a member of the Hawaii State Bar Association's Diversity Equality and Access to Law Committee. Mr. Kennedy's public service also includes serving on the State's Defender



Council, where he has served since his appointment by Governor Green in 2025.

Testimony submitted in support of Mr. Kennedy notes his integrity, calm temperament, and professionalism. Testimony also commends his diligence, respectfulness, fairness, and wealth of legal knowledge from years of experience in multiple jurisdictions and in a variety of areas of law.

Your Committee finds that, based on the testimony submitted on his behalf, responses to questions asked by the members of your Committee, and your Committee's review of information about him and his qualifications, Andrew Michael Kennedy has the knowledge, dedication, and other competencies to be a District Court Judge of the Third Circuit, Island of Hawai'i, and possesses the legal expertise and integrity to fully and faithfully discharge the duties associated with that judicial office.

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



