

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 25, 2026

To: The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair
The Honorable Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Labor and Technology Committee

Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 224, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: G.M. 503, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, DOUGLAS CHANG, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations **supports** the confirmation of Douglas Chang to the Workforce Development Council.

Mr. Chang brings decades of leadership experience in Hawai'i's hospitality industry. Since 2008, he has been a General Manager within the Ritz-Carlton organization and currently oversees Turtle Bay Resort. His responsibilities have included strategic planning, workforce development, and operational excellence for properties that set the standard for service and guest experience.

Hawai'i's visitor industry plays a central role in the state's economy, supporting thousands of jobs and generating substantial tax revenue. As the industry continues to evolve, maintaining a skilled and adaptable workforce remains critical to its long-term sustainability. Mr. Chang brings extensive hospitality expertise, a strong understanding of guest service and workforce needs, and a demonstrated commitment to employee training, development, and retention. His industry knowledge and leadership will be valuable assets to the Council.

The Department supports his appointment through June 30, 2030, and looks forward to the contributions he will bring to the Council's work.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 503.

GM-503

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:13:31 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/25/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chad Shishido	Testifying for Pearl City High School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 24, 2026

Senator Brandon Elefante, Chair

Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

State of Hawai‘i

Re: Support for the Nomination of Douglas Kahikina Chang to the Hawai‘i Workforce Development Council

Dear Chair Elefante and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the nomination of Douglas Kahikina Chang to serve on the Hawai‘i Workforce Development Council.

I currently serve as the Academy Coordinator at Pearl City High School and previously served as the Academy Lead Teacher for our Culinary Arts, Health Sciences, and Leadership (CAHSL) Academy during Mr. Chang’s four-year tenure as Chair of our Academy Advisory Board. I had the privilege of working closely with him during that time and witnessed firsthand his sustained commitment to building meaningful partnerships between education and industry.

Mr. Chang did not serve as a ceremonial board member. As Chair, he provided consistent leadership, strategic thinking, and a clear focus on aligning our academy’s work with real workforce expectations. He attended meetings prepared, asked thoughtful and often challenging questions, and continuously pushed us to ensure that our students were not only engaged in coursework, but prepared for authentic post-secondary pathways. His leadership helped elevate the purpose of our advisory board from informational meetings to action-oriented collaboration.

One example of his commitment was his participation in a national learning visit to Dubiski Career High School in Grand Prairie, Texas, organized with the support of the National Career Academy Coalition. Mr. Chang traveled with our Pearl City High School team as part of a Hawai‘i contingent to study a nationally recognized career academy model and its systems for aligning education with workforce demands. His willingness to invest his time in professional learning alongside educators demonstrated that he views workforce development as a shared

responsibility between industry and schools. More importantly, he helped us translate what we observed into practical improvements in how we structure career-connected experiences and industry partnerships at Pearl City High School.

His impact has also been consistent and hands-on at the student level. For many years, Mr. Chang has volunteered as a CTE Honors panelist, helping evaluate the research and work-based learning projects of our students pursuing both academic and CTE Honors distinctions. He has also supported our underclassmen by participating in mock interview panels, providing professional feedback and setting authentic industry expectations. These engagements required time, preparation, and a genuine commitment to student growth, and they significantly elevated the rigor and relevance of our programs.

In addition, through his leadership at The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Waikīkī Beach, he established a student internship opportunity for one of our CAHSL students, Jorden Yamamura (Pearl City High School Class of 2025). That internship provided Jorden with authentic exposure to luxury hospitality operations and professional expectations within Hawai‘i’s most important industry.

Today, Jorden is enrolled at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the Shidler College of Business, majoring in Travel Industry Management - fulfilling his goal of pursuing a career in hospitality. While Jorden’s success is a result of his own hard work, the opportunity created through Mr. Chang’s partnership with our academy was a pivotal step in that journey. This is a tangible example of what effective workforce alignment looks like: exposure, mentorship, real-world experience, and a clear post-secondary pathway.

As Academy Coordinator, I regularly work with business and industry partners. What distinguishes Mr. Chang is his ability to understand both the operational needs of industry and the developmental needs of students. As a General Manager who personally interviews candidates, he understands where work-readiness gaps exist. As an advisory board chair and active volunteer, he worked constructively with educators to help close those gaps through curriculum alignment, internships, mentorship, and industry engagement.

Hawai‘i’s hospitality industry remains one of our state’s largest economic drivers. Ensuring that local students see viable, meaningful career pathways within that industry is critical to workforce sustainability. Mr. Chang brings practical hiring experience, statewide industry perspective, and a demonstrated commitment to education-industry collaboration. His leadership on the Workforce Development Council would strengthen the bridge between policy discussions and on-the-ground implementation.

Based on my professional experience working alongside him for four years, I am confident that Douglas Kahikina Chang will serve the Hawai‘i Workforce Development Council with integrity, insight, and a deep commitment to preparing local students for leadership roles within our state’s workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of his confirmation.

Sincerely,

Chad Shishido

Academy Coordinator

Pearl City High School

GM-503

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 3:29:59 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/25/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
simeon miranda	Testifying for HLTA & Embassy Suites Waikiki	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As the 2026 Chairperson of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association and General Manager of Embassy Suites by Hilton Waikiki Beach Walk, I am pleased to offer my strong support for the appointment of Douglas Chang to the State Workforce Development Council within the Department of Labor. I can think of no one more qualified or more committed to representing the tourism industry’s perspective on Hawai‘i’s Workforce Development Council.

Born and raised in Honolulu and a graduate of the University of Hawai‘i with a degree in international business, Doug brings more than 40 years of executive leadership experience managing major luxury resort properties across Hawai‘i and the continental United States. He is widely respected throughout the tourism and broader business community as a thoughtful and accomplished leader who prioritizes workforce development and employee advancement. He currently serves as General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton O‘ahu, Turtle Bay.

Prior to his move to Turtle Bay, Doug and I worked closely together through his service on the Executive Board of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association, where he leads our Workforce Development Working Group. Workforce development is a central pillar of HLTA’s strategic priorities, and Doug has played an instrumental role in shaping our long-term strategy and implementation plan. His work requires meaningful collaboration with private industry partners, institutions of higher education, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and members of the State Legislature.

Doug is also deeply committed to mentoring the next generation of hospitality professionals. He has been an active participant in HLTA’s Generational Mentoring Program, volunteering his time over several years to mentor students pursuing tourism and hospitality degrees. In several cases, he has provided full-time employment opportunities to help launch their careers. At the secondary education level, he serves as Advisory Board Chair of Pearl City High School’s Hospitality Academy, further demonstrating his commitment to strengthening Hawai‘i’s workforce pipeline.

His expertise in tourism and his cultural awareness have been widely recognized. Doug has previously served as a board member of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, as well as on the boards of the Kaua‘i Visitors Bureau, the Maui Visitors and Convention Bureau, and the Maui Hotel

and Lodging Association. In addition to his continued service with HLTA, he serves on the board of the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, of which he is a founding member.

I am confident that Doug would be a valuable and effective member of the Workforce Development Council. His depth of experience, collaborative leadership style, and long-standing commitment to workforce advancement make him exceptionally well-suited for this role. I respectfully hope he will receive your favorable consideration.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Simeon Miranda

General Manager - Embassy Suites by Hilton Waikiki Beach Walk

Chairperson 2026 Hawaii Lodging Tourism Association

GM-503

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 4:26:15 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/25/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John aeto	Testifying for The Kalaimoku Group.	Support	Written Testimony Only

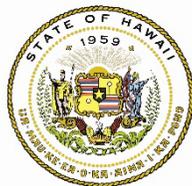
Comments:

Dear Chair,

I am submitting testimony in support of Douglas Chang to join the Hawaii Workforce Development Council. I have known and work with Doug for over 15 years and find him to be honest, hard working, transparent and one of the smartest people in Hawaii. He knows business, tourism and workforce development at a high level. I am so glad we have someone as talented and able to fill this important role in our State

DR. JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE BUTAY
DLIR DIRECTOR

WILLIAM KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

KEITH DEMELLO
CHAIRPERSON

BENNETTE E. MISALUCHA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
830 Punchbowl Street, Suite 317, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone: (808) 586-8815 Web: <http://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/>

To: The Honorable Senator Brandon Elefante, Chair,
The Honorable Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice-Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

From: Bennette E. Misalucha

Executive Director, Workforce Development Council

Re: GM 503: Gubernatorial Nominee, Douglas Chang

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IN STRONG SUPPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of the Senate confirmation of **Douglas Chang** to serve on the Workforce Development Council.

Douglas Chang represents the private sector and brings critical expertise from Hawai'i's tourism and hospitality industry, one of the State's primary economic drivers. He serves as General Manager of **The Ritz-Carlton O'ahu, Turtle Bay**, where he oversees operations and strategic direction for one of Hawai'i's premier luxury properties. His leadership during the transition and rebranding of the iconic Turtle Bay Resort reflects a high level of operational, strategic, and organizational capability.

Douglas brings nearly four decades of experience in luxury hospitality, including senior leadership roles across multiple Ritz-Carlton properties and resort destinations. His career demonstrates deep understanding of workforce dynamics within the visitor industry, from talent development and service excellence to leadership cultivation and organizational performance. These insights are directly relevant to the Workforce Development Council's mission of aligning workforce strategies with industry needs.

Equally important is Douglas's longstanding commitment to community engagement and workforce

development. He has served in numerous leadership capacities that intersect with education, training, and industry advancement. His prior roles include Advisory Board Chair for Pearl City High School's academy program, Board Member of the Hawai'i Tourism & Lodging Association, and leadership of its Workforce Development working group. These experiences underscore his practical involvement in strengthening career pathways and opportunities for Hawai'i's residents.

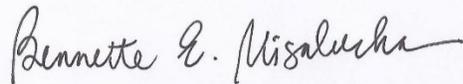
Douglas's public service record further reflects his breadth of perspective and civic leadership. He has served as Board Member, Chair, and Vice Chair of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, as well as in advisory and governance roles across multiple visitor industry and community organizations statewide. His contributions consistently reflect a collaborative, solutions-oriented approach and a strong understanding of Hawai'i's economic and workforce ecosystem.

Douglas is widely respected for his steady leadership, industry knowledge, and ability to connect strategic priorities with operational realities. His experience managing large, complex organizations and developing high-performing teams positions him to provide valuable guidance to the Council's work, particularly in areas involving employer engagement, industry alignment, and talent development.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support the confirmation of Douglas Chang. His expertise, leadership, and deep roots in Hawai'i's community and economy make him an exceptional asset to the Workforce Development Council.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bennette E. Misalucha". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light blue rectangular background.

Bennette E. Misalucha
Executive Director
Workforce Development Council



*Testimony of
Mufi Hannemann
President & CEO
Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association*

*Committee on Labor and Technology
Wednesday, February 25, 2026*

GM 503 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, DOUGLAS CHANG, for a term to expire 06-30-2030

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) **Strongly Supports GM 503-** Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, DOUGLAS CHANG, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

HLTA represents the state's lodging and tourism industry, which remains Hawai'i's largest private-sector employer and a critical pillar of our economy. Workforce development is one of HLTA's top policy priorities, and we can think of no individual better qualified to serve in this role than Mr. Chang. With more than four decades of executive leadership in Hawai'i's hospitality industry, he brings unmatched experience in workforce training, career pathway development, and talent retention across O'ahu, Maui, and Kaua'i.

Mr. Chang currently serves as General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton O'ahu, Turtle Bay and as Workforce Development Committee Chair for HLTA. In that role, he has worked directly with employers, the Department of Education, community colleges, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and the Legislature to strengthen internship programs, expand work-based learning, and improve alignment between education and real-world job opportunities. He has also served as a mentor to students and young professionals and as an advisory board chair for high school career academies, helping inspire local youth to view hospitality as a viable and rewarding long-term career.

Beyond his professional credentials, Mr. Chang brings a deep commitment to Hawai'i's communities and to ensuring that local residents can access quality jobs that allow them to remain in Hawai'i and support their families. His experience integrating cultural values into

business practices and his understanding of workforce challenges across different islands will provide valuable perspective to the Council's work.

At a time when Hawai'i faces significant workforce shortages and rapid technological change, the Workforce Development Council needs members who understand both industry needs and the education-to-employment pipeline. Mr. Chang's career reflects exactly that intersection.

For these reasons, HLTA urges the Senate to **confirm GM 503** and strongly supports the appointment of Douglas Kahikina Chang to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Mufi Hannemann
President & CEO
Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association



LATE



KEKOA MCCLELLAN

Principal, The McClellan Group
Hawaii Spokesperson, American Hotel & Lodging Association
Chief Advocate, The Hawaii Hotel Alliance

February 25, 2026

**The Honorable Brandon Elefante, Chair, and;
The Honorable Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair,
The Hawaii Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 225 415 South Beretania Street Honolulu, HI 96813**

RE: GM 503 – Submitting Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of the Nomination of DOUG CHANG to the Workforce Development Council

Aloha Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is **Kekoa McClellan**, and I am honored to testify today on behalf of the **American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) & Hawaii Hotel Alliance (HHA.)**

It is a distinct honor and a personal privilege to write in support of Doug Chang's nomination to the Workforce Development Council. In the world of Hawaii's visitor industry, we often say that hotels are like small cities—vibrant ecosystems that require constant care, complex infrastructure, and a steady hand. If a hotel is a city, then the General Manager is its Mayor. They deal with every issue our Counties do: public safety, facilities maintenance, waste management, and, most critically, the development and care of the people within those walls.

There is no "Mayor" in our industry more seasoned, more respected, or more compassionate than Doug Chang.

A Legacy of Leadership and Mentorship

On a personal note, Doug is more than a colleague; he is a mentor and a cherished family friend. I have watched him lead for decades, not from a high tower, but from the front lines. Doug lives by the legendary hospitality credo that we are "*Ladies and Gentlemen serving Ladies and Gentlemen.*" He treats the housekeeper who ensures a guest's comfort with the same profound respect as the executive in the boardroom.

His commitment to helping everyone in his "city" succeed is legendary. Whether it is a bell-hop looking for a break or a marketing professional aiming for the C-suite, Doug has spent his storied career opening

doors and clearing pathways for hundreds of local residents to grow their careers and provide for their families.

Integrating Hawaiian Values

As a Native Hawaiian leader, Doug is the living embodiment of the late Dr. George Kanahale's vision. He has successfully integrated our deep-seated Hawaiian values—*Ho'okipa* (hospitality), *Kuleana* (responsibility), and *Aloha*—into the very fabric of the Hawaii tourism experience. He understands that our workforce isn't just a labor statistic; it is our *'ohana*. To Doug, workforce development is about more than just filling jobs—it's about the dignity of work and the sustainability of our community.

Breadth of Expertise for the Council

Doug's experience covers the full spectrum of Hawaii's workforce. He has navigated the unique challenges facing engineers, cooks, lawyers, and landscapers alike. He understands the pressures of our local labor market and has the unique ability to find common-sense solutions to the most complex workforce hurdles.

Doug Chang does not just represent the hotel industry; he represents the heart of Hawaii's working people. He will be a transformative asset to the Workforce Development Council, bringing a perspective that is both global in its standards and deeply local in its soul.

I most strongly and respectfully urge this Committee to advise and consent to the nomination of Doug Chang.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kekoa', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Kekoa McClellan,
Hawaii Spokesperson, AHLA, and;
Chief Advocate, HHA

GM-503

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:59:50 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/25/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Malia Sanders	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF DOUGLAS KAHIKINA CHANG TO THE HAWAI'I WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Attn: Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Aloha and mahalo for the opportunity to provide personal testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Douglas Kahikina Chang to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council.

My name is Laura Mālia Sanders. As an emerging Native Hawaiian leader in Hawai'i's hospitality industry, I offer this testimony not only from a professional standpoint, but from personal experience working alongside Doug these past 14 years. Doug is widely respected for his executive leadership and industry accomplishments. However, what has impacted me most is the way he leads.

Doug is not afraid to ask hard questions.

In governance discussions, strategic planning, and workforce conversations, Doug consistently pushes us to ensure that decisions are aligned with our values, mission, and long-term vision. He does not allow conversations to remain at the surface level. He asks the questions that bring clarity, accountability, and integrity to the process. That kind of leadership strengthens institutions and builds trust.

As someone growing in leadership within Hawai'i's hospitality industry and as someone vested in Hawai'i's future, I have personally benefited from observing his example and being directly mentored by him. Doug leads in a way that is strong and formidable, yet grounded and steady. He creates space for others to learn and rise. He challenges with purpose, listens deeply, and then speaks frankly and clearly when direction is needed. That combination of intelligence, experience, and moral clarity is rare.

Doug also carries the distinction of being the first Native Hawaiian General Manager of a luxury hotel in Hawai'i. He understands both the opportunity and the responsibility that come with that role. In complex environments where there may be multiple perspectives and competing interests, he remains anchored in his foundational values. He stands firmly without being divisive and that integrity is critical in public service.

Workforce development in Hawai‘i requires more than industry knowledge. It requires leaders who will examine systems honestly, advocate courageously, and ensure that policies truly serve our people. Doug’s experience across multiple islands, his mentorship of emerging professionals, and his deep commitment to developing local talent make him exceptionally well qualified to serve.

As someone who is part of the next generation of Native Hawaiian leadership in Hawai‘i, I can say with confidence that Doug’s presence on the Hawai‘i Workforce Development Council will elevate the work and ensure that it remains grounded in accountability, cultural values, and long-term impact.

I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Douglas Kahikina Chang.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Mālia Sanders