

Date: April 10, 2026

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Governor's Message 564

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS strongly supports Governor's Message 564 which nominates Shawn Kanaiaupuni to serve as a member of the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

As the president and chief executive officer of Partners in Development Foundation, Ms. Kana'iaupuni oversees a variety of initiatives and programs aimed at improving the lives of Native Hawaiians, a group who is disproportionately represented in statistics including poverty, foster care, and the corrections system.

Our organization works closely with Ms. Kana'iaupuni and Partners in Development Foundation, and we feel strongly that her position with her organization as well as the greater community will enable her to bring unique perspective and insight to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council. Her experiences and the scope of her organization's efforts make her an ideal candidate for this role, and ECAS respectfully urges the Committee to confirm Ms. Kana'iaupuni to serve on the Council.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

April 8, 2026

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the Committee:

RE: GM564, Gubernatorial Nominee Shawn Kana'iaupuni, for confirmation to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support** of GM564 to confirm Shawn Kana'iaupuni to serve on the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

On behalf of Lanakila Pacific, I would like to express my wholehearted support for Governor Green's nomination of Shawn Kana'iaupuni. Shawn is the President and CEO of one of Hawai'i's most respected and influential organizations, Partners in Development Foundation (PIDF). PIDF often plays a key role in convening collaborations and collectively serving the community through Native Hawaiian values, including innovative youth justice work. Her leadership reflects both professional excellence and a deep commitment to community impact, making her perspective especially valuable to the Council's work.

Lanakila Pacific is an 85-year-old, local nonprofit with a mission to build independence for individuals with cognitive, physical, social, or age-related challenges. Our organization provides employment training and job placement for people with disabilities, and we have an established partnership with PIDF to serve youth through the Kiapu program. Through this partnership, I know firsthand that Shawn's leadership and commitment to excellence in her field are key to rehabilitating and reducing the number of adjudicated youths in Hawaii.

Please strongly consider Ms. Kana'iaupuni's nomination for confirmation.

Aloha,



Rona Yagi Fukumoto
President and CEO

Melissa Pavlicek
1099 Alakea Street, Suite 2530
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Testimony in Support of Dr. Shawn Kana'iaupuni
For Appointment to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council (JJSAC)

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Dr. Shawn Kana'iaupuni's appointment to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

Dr. Kana'iaupuni currently serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of Partners in Development Foundation, where she leads the organization in advancing its educational and community service mission through a deep commitment to its core values. Under her leadership, the organization has strengthened partnerships and driven meaningful systems change to support Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations, including youth and families experiencing homelessness, those in foster care, and individuals in rural and underserved communities.

I have had the privilege of knowing Dr. Kana'iaupuni for over 15 years and working closely with her on a weekly basis. She is an extraordinary and visionary leader whose work is grounded in both compassion and results. One of her most impactful contributions is the creation of the Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i Hui, a policy initiative that engages law students in advocacy efforts aimed at reducing youth incarceration. Through her leadership, this initiative has sustained more than five years of dedicated policy work focused on mitigating and eliminating the harmful effects of youth incarceration.

Dr. Kana'iaupuni brings a rare combination of intellectual rigor, cultural grounding, and collaborative leadership. She has an unwavering commitment to improving outcomes for Hawai'i's youth and a demonstrated ability to bring people together to create lasting change. Her voice, experience, and vision would be invaluable assets to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

On a personal note, Dr. Kana'iaupuni inspires me tremendously. I am deeply grateful for her leadership and for all that she continues to do for our state. I would not be the volunteer that I am, nor the advocate or attorney that I am today, were it not for Dr. Kana'iaupuni's professional mentorship, collaboration and friendship.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support for her appointment.

Sincerely,
Melissa Pavlicek

Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i

KAWAIILOA

April 8, 2026

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: Justice State Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Shawn Kana'iaupuni's Consideration and Confirmation to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and members of the Committee:

My name is Kapri Tulang-De Silva, and I am a third-year law student at the University of Hawai'i William S. Richardson School of Law, as well as a Ph.D. student in Transformative Education at the College of Education. I am writing in strong support of State Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Shawn Kana'iaupuni's consideration and confirmation to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

I currently serve as a policy intern for Hawai'i Public Policy Advocates under the Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i (OYAH) division. OYAH is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. They seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth houselessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth. It was through this program that I formally met Ms. Kana'iaupuni.

Ms. Kana'iaupuni is deeply committed to serving Hawai'i's marginalized communities, especially Native Hawaiians and the children of Hawai'i. This is evident not only in her words but in her actions. She is always seeking opportunities to connect with the community in meaningful ways and build lasting networks, as reflected in her strong presence and visibility within the community. This is also evident in her efforts to strengthen Hawai'i's juvenile justice system by identifying practical pathways and resources to support meaningful change. Through my time with OYAH thus far, I have attended several meetings with Ms. Kana'iaupuni. She often joins these meetings remotely because she is frequently out in the community engaged in service and relationship-building. Therefore, it is clear that she is not simply someone who speaks about service, but someone who consistently shows up and does the work herself.


In addition to her advocacy, she is also deeply rooted in Native Hawaiian culture, as evidenced by her involvement with the Polynesian Voyaging Society's Worldwide Voyage and other programs. I later learned that I had actually played volleyball with her daughter awhile back, who attended kaiapuni, speaks fluent 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, and who actively engages with her community through work in māla and lo'i. Ms. Kana'iaupuni's strong cultural and community ties have been passed on and instilled in her family as they also carry forward her legacy.

One of my most meaningful memories with Ms. Kana'iaupuni was during a meeting where she shared that she would be traveling to Aotearoa to learn about Indigenous youth cultural courts, with the goal of exploring how similar approaches could be adapted to address the overrepresentation of Native Hawaiian and Indigenous youth in Hawai'i's juvenile justice system. At the time, I was working on my second-year law seminar paper on how Hawai'i's juvenile justice system could become more culturally responsive. I asked whether it would be possible to join her on the trip so I could gain firsthand experience and engage directly with judges and practitioners in Aotearoa.

She generously supported my participation and helped make the trip possible, including sponsoring it. It became one of the most formative experiences of my life. Through that opportunity, I gained invaluable insights that directly informed my paper, which ultimately received the 2025 Native Hawaiian Bar Association Best SYS Paper Award. That work, and the experience behind it, would not have been possible without her support and her commitment to creating opportunities for learning and growth and to uplifting and advocating for our lāhui.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Shawn Kana‘iaupuni for the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

Sincerely,


Kapri Tulang-De Silva

1099 Alakea Street, Suite 2530 | Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 | (808) 447-1840

April 9, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: Justice State Advisory Council, gubernatorial nominee, Shawn Kana'iaupuni's
Consideration and Confirmation to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and members of the Committee:

My name is Ka'ohi Gomera, and I am a second-year law student at the University of Hawai'i William S. Richardson School of Law. I am writing in strong support of the State Advisory Council, gubernatorial nominee, Shawn Kana'iaupuni's consideration and confirmation to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

I currently serve as a policy intern with Hawai'i Public Policy Advocates through the Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i (OYAH) initiative. OYAH brings together organizations and community members dedicated to reducing the harms of punitive youth incarceration, advancing equity within the justice system, and expanding access to mental health resources for adolescents and young adults. The initiative also works to strengthen support systems for youth transitioning into adulthood, address youth homelessness and housing discrimination, and promote culturally grounded, holistic approaches in public and private services.

Native Hawaiians are overrepresented in Hawai'i's justice system, accounting for 30% of the state's youth population, but account for about half of all detention center populations in the state of Hawai'i. (*Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being*, Vol. 7). These disparities are rooted in Western colonization and the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The introduction of land ownership displaced Native Hawaiians from their homes, and cultural practices such as hula and speaking 'Ōlelo Hawai'i were banned. Today, these historical injustices continue to manifest in higher rates of homelessness, incarceration, and poverty among Native Hawaiians.

In light of these realities, Ms. Kana'iaupuni is exceptionally qualified to serve on the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council. Her perspective as a Native Hawaiian woman would be invaluable for addressing these disparities and advancing more equitable, culturally grounded approaches to youth justice. Ms. Kana'iaupuni is a member of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and was a part of Hōkūle'a's 2015 worldwide voyage. Ms. Kana'iaupuni is fluent in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and engages with her community through work in māla and lo'i. Ms. Kana'iaupuni is a Kamehameha Schools alumna and previously spearheaded Kamehameha's schools' Public Education Support Division, which included research and studies on culture-based education and its impacts. As a strategy consultant, she has guided major long-term planning efforts, helping shape a 25-year vision for Kamehameha Schools and other high-impact strategic plans. In her current role as President and Chief Executive Officer at Partners in Development Foundation, she leads the organization in serving the community of Hawai'i and strives to find systemic solutions for Hawai'i's homeless, low-income, and rural families. Ms. Kana'iaupuni is recognized for her ability to bring diverse stakeholders together, communicate a vision effectively, and implement solutions that create lasting, community-centered impact.

Ms. Kana'iaupuni's background, education, and current work have prepared her for this role, and she is well-equipped to advance policies that uplift Hawai'i's youth and communities. Addressing these inequities requires not only policy reform but also meaningful Native Hawaiian leadership in decision-making spaces. Those most impacted by systemic injustice must have a voice in shaping solutions. Increasing Native Hawaiian representation on bodies such as the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council is essential to ensuring that policies are informed by lived experience, cultural knowledge, and a deep understanding of Hawai'i's communities.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Shawn Kana'iaupuni for the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

Sincerely, Ka'ohi Gomera

April 8, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Re: Justice State Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Shawn Kana'iaupuni's
Consideration and Confirmation to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

My name is Justice Castroverde-Moniz, and I am a second-year law student at the University of Hawai'i William S. Richardson School of Law. I am writing in strong support of State Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, Shawn Kana'iaupuni's consideration and confirmation to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

I currently serve as a policy intern for Hawai'i Public Policy Advocates, within the Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i (OYAH) division. OYAH is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth, promoting equity in the justice system, and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. They seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth houselessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

Dr. Kana'iaupuni's extensive record of leadership, public service, and commitment to improving the lives of children, youth, and families makes her exceptionally well qualified for this important role. Throughout her career, Dr. Kana'iaupuni has demonstrated deep and sustained dedication to equity, education, and community well-being in Hawai'i. Her professional background reflects more than 25 years of experience in education, organizational leadership, research, and community collaboration. She has led major strategic initiatives, built partnerships across the public and private sectors, and advanced systems-change efforts that have directly supported underserved communities, including Native Hawaiian, low-income, foster, homeless, rural, and opportunity youth.

Dr. Kana'iaupuni's experience is especially relevant to juvenile justice because she understands that youth outcomes are shaped by education, family stability, cultural connection, and access to supportive systems. Her work has consistently focused on strengthening those protective factors. She has helped lead initiatives addressing the disproportionate representation of Native Hawaiians in the criminal legal system and has worked collaboratively with state agencies, nonprofit partners, educators, and community organizations to develop practical, community-based solutions. Her background as a researcher and educator further strengthens her qualifications. She has produced significant scholarship on Native Hawaiian well-being, educational outcomes, and culturally grounded approaches to success. This combination of research, leadership, and lived engagement with Hawai'i communities would bring a valuable perspective to the Council's work. She is the kind of thoughtful, strategic, and mission-driven

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leader who can help ensure that juvenile justice policy is informed by both data and community experience. Just as importantly, Dr. Kana'iaupuni is a collaborative leader with a proven ability to bring people together around complex challenges. She has led multi-sector partnerships, managed large portfolios, guided strategic planning processes, and supported initiatives designed to improve outcomes for children and families. Her leadership style is rooted in aloha, accountability, and excellence, and she brings both vision and practical implementation skills to every effort.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to recommend Dr. Kana'iaupuni for the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council.

Justice Castroverde-Moniz