

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 16 2026

RE: GOV. MSG. NOS. 779,
792, 793

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

Sir:

Your Committee on Labor and Technology, to which was referred Governor's Message Nos. 779, 792, and 793, submitting for study and consideration the nominations of:

HAWAI'I WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

G.M. No. 779 MARK PHONGSAVATH
for a term to expire 06-30-2030;

G.M. No. 792 CHERYL CROSS
for a term to expire 06-30-2030; and

G.M. No. 793 ASHLEIGH LOA
for a term to expire 06-30-2030,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal histories, resumes, and statements submitted by Mark Phongsavath, Cheryl Cross, and Ashleigh Loa for service on the Hawaii Workforce Development Council.

Mark Phongsavath

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Mark Phongsavath from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Workforce Development Council; Hawaii State AFL-CIO; Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO; Hawaii Electricians Market Enhancement Program; International Brotherhood



of Electrical Workers, Local 1186, AFL-CIO; Hawai'i Nurses' Association, OPEIU Local 50; and three individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Phongsavath's background and dedication to serving the public qualify him to be appointed to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council as a member representing labor organizations and workforce training organizations. Your Committee notes that Mr. Phongsavath is a workforce development advocate and labor leader with over a decade of experience in the State's electrical industry. Mr. Phongsavath began his career in the building trades as an apprentice, advanced to journey person, and currently serves as Lead Organizer for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union 1186, where he works with workers, employers, and training providers to strengthen the State's skilled workforce and advance initiatives to build leadership, expand awareness of trade careers, and improve coordination among workforce partners. Your Committee finds that Mr. Phongsavath has a thorough understanding of the role and responsibilities of board members and his practical, frontline perspective will play a key role in advancing the Council's mission to build a responsive and inclusive workforce system grounded in real-world conditions, while strengthening career pathways, improving job quality, and expanding meaningful work opportunities for local residents. Your Committee therefore recommends that Mark Phongsavath be appointed to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council based on his knowledge, background, and dedication to public service.

Cheryl Cross

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the reappointment of Cheryl Cross from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Workforce Development Council, Hawaii LECET, and eleven individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Cross's background and dedication to serving the public qualify her to be appointed to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council as a private sector member. Your Committee notes that Ms. Cross has nearly twenty-five years of experience in strategic workforce development, talent acquisition, and multi-sector stakeholder engagement. Her professional experience consists of a broad portfolio of accomplishments in the field of human resources in both the public and private sectors, including her current position as an Executive Search Consultant at Inkinen and



Associates, LLC, a boutique recruiting firm specializing in executive placements in Hawaii, and as a Media and Marketing Consultant at C.A. Cross & Associates, LLC, where she provides subject matter expert consulting to U.S. Department of Defense clients. Your Committee further notes that Ms. Cross has been an active and highly valued member of the Council since 2022, is currently serving on its Executive Board, and has a thorough understanding of the role and responsibilities of its members. Your Committee finds that Ms. Cross's experience and knowledge will continue to enhance the effectiveness of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council. Your Committee therefore recommends that Cheryl Cross be reappointed to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council based on her experience, knowledge, and commitment to public service.

Ashleigh Loa

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Ashleigh Loa from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Workforce Development Council, and thirteen individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Loa's background and dedication to serving the public qualify her to be appointed to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council as an Oahu member. Your Committee notes that Ms. Loa has almost a decade of experience leading nonprofit initiatives in community development and workforce engagement, including advancing career readiness, strengthening connections between service providers and communities, and helping individuals navigate pathways toward employment and skill building. Ms. Loa currently serves as the Director of Operations for Hawaiian Community Assets, a nonprofit housing counseling agency certified by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, where she contributes to advancing programs that integrate affordable housing, culturally grounded financial education, and asset-building strategies--efforts directly aligned with workforce development goals, as stable housing and financial literacy are essential to sustained employment, career advancement, and overall economic mobility. Your Committee further notes that Ms. Loa is an active member in her community, serving as a board member of the Legal Clinic and advisory member for the SHADE Group. Your Committee finds that Ms. Loa has a thorough understanding of the role and responsibilities of board members and her extensive experience in nonprofit leadership will continue to enhance the effectiveness of



the Hawaii Workforce Development Council. Your Committee therefore recommends that Ashleigh Loa be appointed to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council based on her knowledge, background, and dedication to public service.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committee on Labor and Technology that are attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominees, has found the nominees to be qualified for the positions to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nominations.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Labor and
Technology,


BRANDON J.C. ELEFANTE, Chair



