

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

3909

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 23 2026

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 796

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 Governor's Message No. 796, submitting for study and consideration the appointment of:

CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SECOND CIRCUIT (ISLAND OF MAUI)

G.M. No. 796      ANNALISA M. BERNARD LEE  
for a term to expire in 10 years,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Judge Annalisa M. Bernard Lee for service on the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit (Island of Maui).

Your Committee received testimony in support of the appointment of Judge Annalisa M. Bernard Lee from the Office of the Governor and nine individuals.

Your Committee received comments on the appointment of Judge Annalisa M. Bernard Lee 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

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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 Circuit Court Judge of the Second Circuit (Island of Maui).

Judge Bernard Lee attended the Seattle University where she graduated Cum Laude and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. She received her Juris Doctor from the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in 2004. Following her graduation from law school, Judge Bernard Lee clerked in the Circuit Court of the First Circuit for the Honorable Derrick H.M. Chan and the Honorable Michael A. Town. Judge Bernard Lee has been licensed to practice law in the State of Hawai'i since 2005.

Since 2022, Judge Bernard Lee has worked as a District Court Judge for the District Court of the Second Circuit. Before becoming a judge, Judge Bernard Lee dedicated her legal career to public service. From 2015 to 2021, Judge Bernard Lee was a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney at the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney for the County of Maui. She also has extensive experience as a defense attorney, having worked as a Deputy Public Defender for the Office of the Public Defender on O'ahu and Maui from 2005 to 2015.

In addition to her professional work, Judge Bernard Lee is an active member of the legal community. She currently serves on the Access to Justice Commission and the Judiciary Committee on Artificial Intelligence and the Courts. Judge Bernard Lee also serves on the Judicial Administration Committee of the Hawaii State Bar Association and is a faculty member of the Hawaii State Bar Association Trial Academy. Additionally, she serves as a volunteer judge for the Hawaii State Bar Association's High School Mock Trial Program and is a member of the Hawaii Filipino Lawyer Association.

Testimony submitted in support of Judge Bernard Lee's appointment commends her fairness, dedication to the pursuit of justice, and preparedness. Testimony further commends her professionalism, compassion, and efficiency.



Your Committee finds that, based on the testimony submitted on her behalf, responses to questions asked by the members of your Committee, and your Committee's review of information about her and her qualifications, Judge Annalisa M. Bernard Lee has the knowledge, dedication, and other competencies to be a Circuit Court Judge of the Second Circuit (Island of Maui), 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,



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KARL RHOADS, Chair



