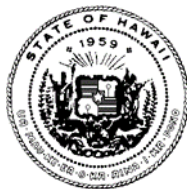


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April 7, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director  
Lea Dias, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

SUBJECT: **GM 568 – RELATING TO CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, EMILY WILKINSON, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2028.**

**Hearing:** Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 1:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS), on behalf of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), supports the confirmation of Ms. Emily Wilkinson to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

**PURPOSE:** The SRC was established by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The SRC works in partnership with the DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to review, analyze, and advise on services that address the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in Hawai'i.

Ms. Wilkinson is seeking appointment to the SRC as representative of the Client Assistance Program per section 348-8(a)(7), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), established under section 796d of 29 U.S. Code § 725, et seq.

For over sixteen years, Ms. Wilkinson has been a Disability Rights Advocate at the Hawaii Disability Rights Center (HDRC), where she has built strong relationships with members

of the disabled community. As a certified Protection and Advocacy Advocate for Beneficiaries of Social Security, she has the skills, knowledge, and demonstrated experience with empowering individuals with disabilities and their families through her advocacy and is a highly valuable asset to the SRC.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of Ms. Wilkinson's nomination to the State Rehabilitation Council.

**GM-568**

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 4:35:45 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/8/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am pleased to offer strong support for the nomination of Emily Wilkinson to serve on the State Rehabilitation Council. She has been with HDRC for eighteen years as an advocate and has been an exemplary employee . As a life-long resident of Hawai'i with a disability, and a former client of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, she has first hand experience with the challenges individuals face when navigating employment, accessibility, and independence. She will contribute her experience to help strengthen the program, ensure services remain responsive and equitable, and support others in achieving meaningful employment and independence. As a member of the State Rehabilitation Council, she would serve as the representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) for the Hawai'i Disability Rights Center. In this role, she would act as a bridge between consumers, advocates, and the vocational rehabilitation system that support fairness, transparency, and meaningful outcomes for the disability community.

For the past 18 years, she has worked closely with members of the disability community through outreach, education, and individualized support. Her primary area of expertise is in Social Security Administration work incentives for SSI and SSDI recipients, and through this work she has developed strong skills in advocacy, communication, and problem-solving. She understands the challenges that individuals with disabilities encounter when pursuing employment, and has helped many clients overcome those barriers by empowering them with accurate information and guidance. This background gives her a practical perspective that will support thoughtful, informed decision-making as a member of the Council.

I can confidently say that Emily would be an outstanding member of the Council and I support her nomination one hundred percent. We hope the Committee will give her favorable consideration.

**GM-568**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 2:22:40 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/8/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Reinalyn M. Terrado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Testimony in Support of Emily Wikinson, nominee for the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support Emily Wilkinson’s appointment to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) as the representative for the Hawaii Disability Rights Center’s (HDRC) Client Assistance Program (CAP).

Since 2009, Emily has been an Advocate at HDRC, bridging state services and our community members with disabilities or mental health issues. Her background is ideal for this role for several reasons:

- **Subject Matter Expertise:** Emily is CAP-trained and certified by the Social Security Administration as a PABSS Advocate. She understands work incentives and the barriers disabled individuals face to employment.
- **Proven Advocacy:** Emily achieves practical results. She coordinates outreach to underserved groups and helps clients with complex health care and voter registration needs, understanding their full needs.
- **Collaboration & Professionalism:** Emily balances perspectives well. She works effectively with professionals at all levels and stays focused on solutions during challenging advocacy.
- **Commitment to Empowerment:** Emily believes employment leads to independence. Her daily work removing employment barriers gives her valuable firsthand insight for Council discussions.

Emily’s strong community relationships and deep knowledge of disability rights equip her to represent CAP effectively. I highly recommend her confirmation to the SRC.

Sincerely,

**Reinalyn M. Terrado, She/Her**

Advocacy and Community Engagement Professional

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w: [amazon.com/author/reinalynmterrado](https://amazon.com/author/reinalynmterrado)

*"Hope is a discipline, and we have to practice it every single day." -M. Kaba*