



April 9, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **GM572**, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Commission on the Status of Women, Gubernatorial Nominee, KERESTIN WALKER

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Llasmin Chaîne, LSW, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **GM572**, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Commission on the Status of Women, Gubernatorial Nominee, KERESTIN WALKER

Hearing: Friday, April 10, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

On behalf of the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women, I would like to thank the Committee for hearing this important measure. I would like to express our **support** of **GM572**, Gubernatorial Nominee, KERESTIN WALKER.

Commission members and staff look forward to collaborating with the nominee on our gender equity efforts given their background in mental health, mentoring, grants management, brand development, community outreach, and coalition building.

We respectfully urge this Committee to **pass GM572**, affirming this nominee's appointment to the Commission as a representative of Oahu.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Commission



Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community

Mailing Address: LGBTQ+ Commission, c/o The Department of Human Services,
P.O. Box 339, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96809-0339

Email: hawaiistatelgbtpluscommission@gmail.com
Web: <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/lgbtq-commission/>

April 7, 2026

Senate's Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Friday, April 10, 2026, at 10:00 AM

RE: Strong Support for Governor's Message 572 - Kerestin Walker's Appointment to the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and fellow committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Governor's Message 572 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature to

“improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government.”

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission submits testimony in strong support of Governor's Message 572, appointing Kerestin Walker to the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women.

Kerestin Walker brings a deep and demonstrated commitment to advancing equity, inclusion, and justice for women and marginalized communities across Hawai'i. Her work reflects an understanding of the intersectional challenges faced by women, particularly those who are also impacted by systemic inequities related to sexual orientation, gender identity, race, and socioeconomic status.

The Commission on the Status of Women plays a critical role in ensuring that policies and programs uplift all women in our state. It is essential that its members reflect both the diversity of Hawai'i and the lived experiences of those most impacted by gender-based disparities. Ms. Walker's background, leadership, and community engagement make her exceptionally well-qualified to contribute meaningfully to this important work.

Importantly, her perspective will help strengthen collaboration across state efforts to address issues such as gender-based violence, economic inequality, healthcare access, and discrimination; areas that disproportionately affect mähū, LGBTQIA+ individuals, especially transgender women and women of color.

Proudly established pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 369, as enacted through Act 41, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022

HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Support of GM 572 - Kerestin Walker

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission is confident that Kerestin Walker will serve with integrity, thoughtfulness, and a strong commitment to equity. Her appointment will further the shared goal of building a Hawai'i where all women and girls can thrive.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advise and consent to the appointment of Kerestin Walker to the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

If you or any member of your staff has any questions regarding my testimony you can reach me at hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

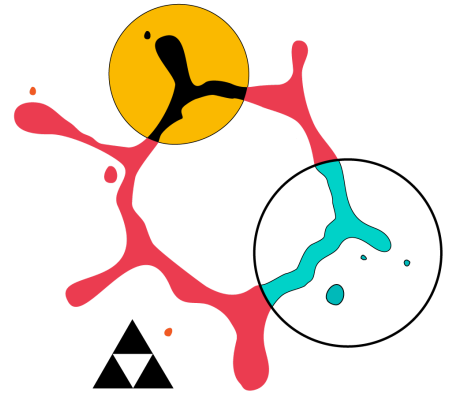
Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

Vice Chair

[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)

[Inclusive LGBTQIA+ Glossary](#)

The [Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#) has this webpage and that is dedicated to understanding and being able to use the correct terms when talking about the rainbow community from mähū to LGBTQIA+ to QTPI+ to MVPFAFF+ and beyond. The list found on this page is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as appropriate.



April 09, 2026

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for the confirmation of Keke Walker to the Commission on the Status of Women.

As the Chief Operating Officer and Lead Creative Strategist at Salted Logic, I've had the opportunity to participate in and document various events organized and led by Keke through her role at SWOP Hawai'i.

Her commitment and dedication to community is singular in its focus. She is passionate about protecting the dignity and safety of our most vulnerable. It is my belief that the Commission on the Status of Women needs to be composed of individuals who are boots on the ground, that understand the needs of women in Hawai'i – Keke is that individual.

I respectfully implore the Committee to recommend consent to Ms. Walker's nomination.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Hinakealohaila Wilkerson

GM-572

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 3:05:59 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/10/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and JDC Committee members,

I write in **unequivocal support for Kerestin "Keke" Walker** as she seeks confirmation for confirmation to the Hawai'i Commission on the Status of Women.

As a public health professional, I have worked with Keke since 2023—as a colleague, community partner, and fellow advocate for public health equity—to address health disparities, inclusive of, but not limited to, infectious disease. Specifically, Keke co-leads the Hep Free Hawai'i Equity Workgroup to center the expertise of people affected by hepatitis via community-based projects (eg, video storytelling, sex worker education).

Outside of her studies and collaboration with HFH, Keke works with several local and national organizations to promote public health and social justice. These include the Birmingham Black Repertory Theatre Collective (as Development Associate), SWOP HI (as Core Organizer/ Development Director), the Cupcake Girls (as Board Member), and the BIPOC Sex Worker Writers Space (as Founder/ Programs Coordinator). This last organization was created to provide paid professional pathways for those with lived experience.

She currently serves as an advisor for both the Peace Development Fund and the New Moon Fund, and she has previously advised the Third Wave Fund. Keke was recently appointed to the Hawai'i Commission on the Status of Women, and she continues to serve the Hawai'i Disability Rights Center and Oahu's Reimagining Safety Coalition.

Keke is a bold, compassionate, and inspiring leader whose dedication to justice, especially in underserved communities, is unwavering. I fully support her confirmation to the Hawai'i Commission on the Status of Women so that our islands will be more equitable and healthy for all women.

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham

GM-572

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 5:14:35 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/10/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicholas Chagnon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Nicholas Chagnon and I am an Assistant Professor of Sociology at UH West Oahu. I am writing to express my support for Keke Walker's appointment to the Commission on the Status of Women. I have known and worked with Keke for approximately four years through our shared interest in improving public safety and wellness in Hawaii, during which time she has impressed me as a visionary advocate and insightful leader. Keke has extensive experience in writing and managing grants and leading advocacy efforts. She exhibits passion and commitment to helping the marginalized in our community and I strongly recommend that she be appointed to serve on the Commission on the Status of Women.

Respectfully,

Nicholas J. Chagnon



April 6, 2026

Dear Commission on the Status of Women:

I write in strong support of Kerestin “Keke” Walker as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women. I first met Ms. Walker in Fall 2023 through what is now known as the Hawai‘i Community Safety Coalition. The coalition works to develop restorative responses to harm as well as transform the conditions of society so that harm is much less likely to occur. We work toward these approaches rather than relying on the punitive actions of the criminal legal system. Ms. Walker has been an integral part of this coalition, always raising the perspectives of those she has come to know through her important community outreach.

While Ms. Walker is involved in several community-based projects, one where she routinely provides vital community care is through the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP). Each week, Ms. Walker is a part of offering dinner and basic safety / hygiene kits to people on the street, many of whom are unhoused, are sex workers, and/or struggle with chronic health conditions. This is one of the ways that Ms. Walker has worked to build relationships with and organize sex workers as well as other people who have been marginalized. The process has been slow, but, like any good community organizer, Ms. Walker realizes that trust is built over time. By continuously providing resources, Ms. Walker, along with SWOP, are making sure that people who are the most vulnerable have access to basic care. She has even worked with college students who are interested in being involved in community outreach, including one of my former students.

The wisdom and poise that Ms. Walker brings to her work compels people from a variety of communities and backgrounds to engage with her. She is warm to individuals who are open to learning about community organizing and outreach, sex work, behavioral health, and harm reduction. She meets people where they are in their learning while also encouraging people to imagine the world with care at the center. When it comes to oppressive systems, however, Ms. Walker does not mince words. She is a tireless advocate for people living in poverty, people of color, trans folks, sex workers, justice-involved neighbors, and those experiencing mental and behavioral health conditions. In addition to the weekly outreach coordination she does, her advocacy comes through submitting testimony to the State legislature on significant bills, organizing creative writing workshops with BIPOC sex workers, facilitating community dialogues on public safety, and much more.

One of the characteristics that I appreciate most about Ms. Walker is her ability to maintain focus on the overall goal of social justice rather than get too caught up in details that threaten solidarity or take focus off of the target. In meetings, I have listened to how she deftly analyzes a situation and calmly offers insight, which then invites others to remember the goal at hand rather than fret about egos or limit efforts to reforms that could have negative consequences for those who are made most vulnerable by unjust systems.

Because of Ms. Walker’s thoughtfulness and creativity, she is the first person I thought of when needing to pass along my volunteer role as lead instructor / facilitator of the Creative Writing Project at the women’s prison in Hawai‘i. When I told Ms. Walker that I’ll be moving out-of-state this summer and was wondering if she might be

interested in continuing with the project, she responded with interest and excitement but also with the careful wisdom of wanting to come and meet with those in the class to see if it is a fit. This is the type of gracious and considerate person Ms. Walker is. She never seems to lose sight of community care and wellbeing, making sure to center those most impacted.

I strongly recommend Ms. Kerestin “Keke” Walker as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women. She will be a tremendous asset in advancing justice for all women, both cisgender and trans.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at mcrb@hawaii.edu or 808-729-1670.

Sincerely,

Colleen Rost-Banik

Colleen Rost-Banik, Ph.D.
Instructor



April 6, 2026

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Re: Support for Kerestin Walker Appointment
to the Commission on the Status of Women

Aloha Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair Gabbard:

This is to strongly support the appointment of Kerestin (Keke) Walker to the Commission on the Status of Women (Commission). I was recently appointed to the Hawaii Disability Rights Center PAIMI Advisory Council (Council) and even in the short time I have known her I have no doubt Ms. Walker will be a terrific addition to the Commission.

Keke not only will bring a wealth of experience, she will provide a unique and much needed perspective on the status of women in Hawaii to the Council's activities.

Thus, without any reservations, I urge the Committee to recommend consent to Ms. Walker's nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James B. Gottstein", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

James B. (Jim) Gottstein, Esq.

April 7, 2026

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Kerestin “Keke” Walker’s nomination and confirmation to the Commission on the Status of Women for a term to expire June 30, 2026.

I have had the privilege of organizing alongside Keke through SWOP-Hawai’i since 2023. In that time, we have collaborated on numerous initiatives, events, and community-based efforts centered on sex worker rights, harm reduction, and advocacy. Through this work, I have witnessed firsthand Keke’s deep commitment to community care and justice.

Keke consistently demonstrates integrity, initiative, and a strong ability to engage diverse communities. She is not only dedicated, but also intentional about centering those most marginalized—particularly individuals impacted by criminalization, stigma, and systemic inequities. Her leadership is grounded in lived experience, compassion, and a clear understanding of the structural barriers facing women and gender-diverse people in Hawai’i.

Keke brings a thoughtful, community-informed perspective that is critically needed on the Commission. She listens deeply, acts collaboratively, and is committed to advancing policies and practices that promote equity, dignity, and safety for all.

I strongly urge you to support Kerestin “Keke” Walker’s confirmation. Her leadership will be an invaluable asset to the Commission on the Status of Women.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim Kwak