

**GM-573**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 2:34:19 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joel Cho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee,

As a life long blind resident of Hawaii I feel that Lou Ann Blake is an excellent candidate to join your Statewide Elections Accessibility Advisory Committee. She is very involved with blind communitities throughout the State and unselfishly gives much of her own time and resources advocating for others. Lou Ann brings a lot to the table and I am very confident that voter participation among our communities will see an increase with her on this very important Committee.

Mahalo for yur consideration of her Nomination.

Sincerely,

Joel Cho

**GM-573**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 3:45:01 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patricia A. Morrissey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Lou Ann Blake

Hawai‘i Statewide Elections Accessibility Advisory Committee

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Patricia Morrissey, and I am the former Chair of the Hawai‘i Statewide Elections Accessibility Advisory Committee. I have spent decades working at the intersection of public policy and disability rights, including advancing access to civic participation for people with disabilities. It is in that capacity—and with a deep understanding of the responsibilities of this Committee—that I offer my strong and unequivocal support for the appointment of Lou Ann Blake.

Ms. Blake brings more than twenty years of highly specialized, national-level experience focused on ensuring that voters with print disabilities can vote privately and independently—both in person and by mail. This is not abstract advocacy. It is deeply technical, highly practical, and directly aligned with the core mission of this Committee.

She has evaluated the most widely used accessible ballot marking devices and remote accessible vote-by-mail (RAVBM) systems in the country, working directly with vendors to improve accessibility. That kind of hands-on systems knowledge is rare and urgently needed. It ensures that accessibility is not treated as an afterthought, but as an integrated component of election design and implementation.

Ms. Blake has also served as an expert witness in multiple federal voting discrimination cases. Her work helped secure accessible vote-by-mail options for voters with print disabilities in Indiana and in Bexar County, Texas—real, tangible outcomes that expanded the franchise for people who had previously been excluded. She is currently serving as an expert in additional cases across Alabama, California, Wisconsin, and even internationally in Ontario, Canada. This demonstrates both the breadth of her expertise and the high level of trust placed in her judgment.

In addition to her legal and technical work, Ms. Blake has led national training and technical assistance efforts for election officials, protection and advocacy systems, and blind and low-vision voters. She understands not only the systems, but the people who must use them and administer them. Her presentations to organizations such as the National Disability Rights Network, the National Association of State Election Directors, the American Bar Association, and the National Council on Disability reflect the respect she commands across multiple sectors.

What distinguishes Ms. Blake is her ability to translate complex accessibility requirements into workable, real-world solutions. That is exactly what this Committee needs—especially at a time when voting systems continue to evolve and the risk of leaving voters with disabilities behind remains very real.

Hawai‘i has long been a leader in recognizing the importance of accessible elections. Appointing Lou Ann Blake would strengthen that leadership. Her expertise, credibility, and commitment to independent, private voting for people with disabilities would be an extraordinary asset to this Committee and to the voters of Hawai‘i.

I strongly urge you to approve her appointment.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Morrissey

Former Chair, Hawai‘i Statewide Elections Accessibility Advisory Committee



**GM-573**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:59:02 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ann Lemke	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Hello, Senators Rhoads and Gabbard,

My name is Ann Lemke and I am submitting testimony in support of GM573, Lou Ann Blake. As a blind person myself, I have participated in the voting process since 1972. This means that I have experienced every srt of barrier, work-around, and finally, private and secret ballot access.

Lou Ann Blake is the most qualified expet I hav ever met with respect to voting rights issues for people with print disabilities. She is articulate and well-informed. I am honored to support her nomination to this committee.

Respectfully,

Ann Lemke, Ph.D.

**GM-573**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:09:53 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katie Keim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of Lou Ann Blakes appointment.

having worked with Ms. Blake for over 10 years on accessible voting ensuring the rights of blind and disabled Americans to cast their vote independently and privately cast,has been a commitment she is obviously grounded in.

Lou Ann well add perspective, committed hard work and invaluable information to the committee.

**GM-573**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:45:36 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Virgil Stinnett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of Lou Ann Blakes appointment.

my experience working alongside Lou Ann for many years, has proven her resound commitment to the rights of blind and disabled Americans, especially when it comes to private and independent accessible voting.

I am in strong support of her appointment to the committee. She will be an asset.

**LATE**

Testimony submitted by James Gashel

Hawaii State Senate,  
Judiciary (JDC) Committee

Thirty-third legislature, 2026 regular session  
March 24, 2026, 9:45 am, hearing on GM573

Good morning Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members. I am James Gashel, proudly supporting the nomination of Lou Ann Blake for appointment as a member of the Statewide Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2029. Although I'm testifying here as an individual, I should also note that I'm currently serving as Vice Chair of this Advisory Committee. In fact, I was among the first group of appointees to this Committee, beginning in 2022, so now into my second term of appointment.

I'm truly honored to have the opportunity to support Ms. Blake's nomination because I know she's among the top tier experts on election accessibility in the United States. This is not an overstatement. As colleagues in the National Federation of the Blind, I've known and worked with Lou Ann Blake on a variety of accessibility matters for twenty years, and I think two or three years beyond that. It's to our good fortune that she chose to begin her retirement in Hawaii, where she still has the opportunity to share her experience and continue making important contributions to the work we need to do.

Important as part of her relevant many year's experience, Ms. Blake led a Help America Vote Act national training and technical assistance project to assist elections officials, advocates, and blind and low-vision voters throughout the United States. This has been particularly important and challenging as states have worked to comply with HAVA's requirements for persons with disabilities to be able to vote privately and independently, including in vote by mail states, such as Hawaii.

She knows and is known in the field of relevant groups, including the National Disability Rights Network, National Association of State Election Directors, American Bar Association Standing Committee on Election Law, National Council on Disability, National Commission on Voting Rights, National Federation of the Blind, and the Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium, held annually.

Based on her knowledge and first-hand experience, I'm confident that Lou Ann Blake will make positive and lasting contributions to our statewide election accessibility efforts and reflect great credit on our disability access initiatives through her service to our state.

Mahalo for your consideration of this nomination.

RE: GM573

Aloha Chair Rhoades, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to fully support LouAnn Blake's nomination by Governor Green GM573 to the State-wide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee.

You will not find anyone else in Hawaii who is more qualified than Lou Ann Blake for this position.

Besides having a law degree, she has had Twenty years experience advocating for the rights of voters with print disabilities to vote privately and independently both in-person and by mail in numerous states, including Hawaii.

Her advocacy included serving as an expert witness in federal voting discrimination cases in Indiana and Texas.

She is currently serving as an expert witness for similar cases from California through Ontario, Canada. For more details of her experience in this area, please refer to her Resume.

For the past several years, since moving to Hawaii, Ms. Blake has been the Manager of the NFB Newsline services for the state of Hawaii. This service has been in Hawaii since at least 2007. During her short time here, she has had a greater positive impact than any previous person in the same position before her.

I support her nomination without any hesitation. I know from personal experience, that Lou Ann is intelligent and well-spoken. She is a good listener, and takes any job she does seriously. She is an asset to Hawaii, to our Country, and to people who are blind (of which I am included).

I fear that if our Hawaii Senate does not approve Ms. Blake's nomination, this will be a tremendous loss for the citizens (both sighted and blind) of Hawaii.

Please take my comments seriously and approve Ms. Blake's nomination for all of us.

Mahalo nui loa.

Deborah Gabe

**LATE**

**GM-573**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:14:47 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marie Kouthoofd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Marie Kouthoofd in Support of GM573 – Nomination of Lou Ann Blake

Hawaii State Senate

Judiciary (JDC) Committee

Good morning Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members,

My name is Marie Kouthoofd, and I am writing in strong support of the nomination of Lou Ann Blake for appointment to the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee.

I have worked with Ms. Blake since 2024 through NFB-NEWSLINE outreach efforts. My interactions with her have consistently shown prompt follow-up, clear and professional communication, and a practical understanding of the issues affecting blind individuals.

That understanding is evident in her advocacy around accessible voting, where she speaks clearly and with precision on issues that directly impact blind voters. I have observed this in National Federation of the Blind chapter discussions as well as in her broader outreach efforts. At her invitation, I participated in an outreach event at the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission, where the focus was on sharing relevant, usable information with the community. That work reflected professionalism and a clear commitment to access.

Her long-standing involvement with the National Federation of the Blind and her broader access-related experience are well established. From direct experience working with her, Lou Ann Blake brings knowledge, consistency, and sound judgment to this work.

This appointment would place a capable and experienced advocate on a committee where that background is directly relevant. I strongly support her nomination and recommend her without reservation.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marie Kouthoofd