

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SIERRA WHITESIDE
CHAIRPERSON

DAINTRY BARTOLDUS
EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
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April 1, 2026

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair San Buenaventura and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: GM710 - State Council on Developmental Disabilities Gubernatorial Nominee Karen Glasser

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS GM 710** to confirm the nomination of Karen Glasser for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

The Council's Federal mandate (P.L.106-402) is clear in determining the composition of this body to ensure that all the players involved in the development, implementation, and use of Developmental Disabilities (DD) supports are represented. The law specifically requires that each Council shall include representatives of relevant State and Private entities related to individuals with disabilities. The law specifically requires that 60 percent of the membership of the Council be comprised of individuals with DD, their parents, or family members. The following type of agency is required to be on the Council: private non-profit organizations concerned with services to individuals with DD.

The Governor's nominee meets the Federal requirement for the Council to be represented by individuals who work in systems supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Karen Glasser brings over a decade of leadership in nonprofit and disability-focused organizations, including her impactful work with Best Buddies Hawai'i and the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Hawai'i. Her deep expertise in program development, policy advocacy, and inclusive community engagement aligns with the Council's mission. Karen's dedication to equity and her ability to build partnerships across agencies make her an asset to the Council. Her voice reflects a systems-level understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing individuals with developmental disabilities in Hawai'i today.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our **strong support for GM 710** to confirm Karen Glasser to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

Aloha Nominee,

Congratulations on being nominated to serve on a State board or commission.

To assist the Senate with its confirmation process, I am requesting that you submit a written statement to my office that addresses the following questions:

(1) Why do you wish to be a member of the board or commission to which you have been nominated?

- I have had the privilege of serving the disability community for the past 16 years both in Hawai'i and in Washington, DC and Virginia, and I spent the past year serving on the Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board as well. The opportunity to continue both sharing and learning within this space allows me to further promote inclusion and equity for those with disabilities. Having worked in several capacities with individuals from 0 – 81 years of age, I have experience and knowledge that will continue to be helpful to the Board should I be re-confirmed.

(2) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of this board or commission?

- I continue to assert that the roles and responsibilities of a member of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities should include:

- sharing knowledge and experiences with the Council that can be used to support the disability community in Hawai'i

- working together on projects that support the services and systems necessary to allow those with disabilities and their families to grow and thrive

- promote inclusion equity, self-determination and other opportunities for those with disabilities so they are able to participate in their communities like their neurotypical peers

(3) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of this board or commission, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member.

- I am qualified to be a member of the Council because I have spent the past 16 years serving the disability community in multiple capacities and can bring wisdom and experience to the role.

- I started my career in disability services as the director of operations and programs for Best Buddies in Virginia & DC (BBVADC) and oversaw the school friendship, supported employment and leadership programs and their staff. I spent time in schools and in the community learning what our students with disabilities and their families needed, and I also wrote and reported on various government and foundation grants. As a regional/state director, I met with government officials to advocate for the disability community and reached out to corporate and private donors to build out exceptional fundraisers that benefited our participants and programs. When I started at Best Buddies in 2013, we had an annual budget of \$357,000 and when I left in December 2019 it had grown to \$1.2 million. Over seven years in Virginia & DC we tripled our staff, tripled the number of participants across the region, and built out several new programs that served children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

- I moved to Best Buddies in Hawai'i (BBHI) in January of 2020 and while the pandemic initially hampered our ability to grow, as it did for all non-profits, our two-person team created a host of online programming to continue supporting our participants. We opened two adult friendship programs – the first of their kind in Hawai'i – online so that adults with IDD could find a larger community, we created Half-Hour Heroes sessions with a new guest host sharing his or her passion/job/hobby/information every week, and we even opened new school chapters on Moloka'i and Lāna'i. Upon my departure from Best Buddies in Hawai'i in January 2024, we had doubled both our staff and our annual budget, and had received a large grant to open a work readiness training program.

- I came to United Cerebral Palsy Association of Hawai'i (UCPAH) as the education and community outreach program manager and was promoted to program manager for the Early Intervention – Honolulu West (formerly South) team eleven months later. I currently manage a team of nine direct support providers and care coordinators who serve keiki 0-3 years of age throughout the 96818 zip code (Joint Base Pearl Harbor/Hickam, Fort Shafter, Moanalua, Aliamanu, Salt Lake). As with my other leadership roles, this position requires timeliness, reporting to government agencies, strong hiring and management skills, deep knowledge of the communities we serve, and a love for our youngest residents with delays and disabilities.

- I also volunteer for several organizations, with some unrelated to disability, so that I can serve our greater community. My skill set is extremely varied, and I am passionate about practicing my kuleana.

(4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

- I hope to continue to meet more individuals dedicated to inclusion and equity for the disability community; I am collaborating on some new programs/projects that benefit the DD community; and I enjoy connecting the organizations I support by making introductions and sharing resources with my peers.

(5) Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the board or commission?

- Honest

- Collaborative

- Reliable

- As I shared last year, honesty is vital, and I make a point of being open and transparent, even when the news I need to share is “not good”. I am a team player and highly value collaboration because it allows everyone to learn something new as they work together create the best possible outcome(s). I also believe it’s important that when I say I’m going to do something, I do it. The only way to facilitate trust and growth in a team/service setting is to do what you’ve promised and do it well.

(6) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the board or commission?

- In December 2024 I was named program manager for the UCPAH Early Intervention – Honolulu West team. While I had been working with the disability community for 15 years, I had little experience supporting keiki 0-3 years of age with developmental delays and/or disabilities. Thankfully, I had already bonded with the seven-person team through the monthly Keiki Playgroup sessions I facilitated with our Occupational Therapist and Special Education Teacher, and they trusted me. They taught me the rules and regulations of early intervention, and I taught them how we could operate more effectively and efficiently via updated administrative/technological systems that weren’t nearly as scary as they seemed. I hired two additional staff to support the team’s continued growth and together we were able to address long-term administrative issues to ensure compliance with state regulations.

My willingness to listen and learn told the team I had no plans to change things just for change's sake, so my assurances that introducing new processes and procedures would help the team were well received. My strong team building skills and dedication to learning benefit the Advisory Board as I continue to research what's most important for the success of the Council while also introducing new approaches that support our constituents and the people who serve them.

(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the board or commission? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?

- I do not foresee any potential conflicts of interest during my service on the Council, but should something arise, I would be honest and transparent with the Chair so that we could address the issue appropriately.

Mahalo for the opportunity to serve on the Council once more. I am truly grateful.

Please submit your responses as a Word document or PDF to the following email address: office.sanbuenaventura@capitol.hawaii.gov.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind you that any testimony submitted to Senate committees on your behalf will be posted on the Legislature's website as submitted. It might be helpful to remind individuals who intend to submit testimony on your nomination of the public nature of the testimony.

Your prompt response in providing the above information will ensure that the Senate confirmation process can proceed in a timely manner.

Mahalo,

Kamana Levy, Office Manager

Office of Senator Joy San Buenaventura

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Hawaii State Senate

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