



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

April 12, 2026

Senate's Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Monday, April 13, 2026, at 1:00 PM

RE: Strong Support for Governor's Message 733 – Sylvia Romm's Appointment to the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus Commission

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and fellow committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Governor's Message 733 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 is pleased to offer our strong support for Governor's Message 733, confirming Dr. Sylvia Romm to serve on the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus Commission for a term to expire June 30, 2030.

Dr. Romm brings an exceptional combination of clinical expertise, public health training, and innovative leadership in healthcare. A pediatrician with more than a decade of experience, she also holds a Master of Public Health from Harvard University and has dedicated her career to improving access to care—particularly through forward-thinking, technology-driven solutions.

Her professional journey reflects a deep commitment to addressing systemic barriers in healthcare. Dr. Romm has held senior leadership roles in telehealth and healthcare innovation, including serving as Chief Innovation Officer for a major health system and as a leader in digital health organizations focused on reaching underserved communities. She is also the founder of healthcare ventures that center patient access and equity, demonstrating both entrepreneurial vision and a strong grounding in community-centered care.

Importantly, Dr. Romm's work has consistently emphasized expanding access, reducing disparities, and leveraging innovation to meet people where they are—values that closely align with the mission of the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission. Her experience in telemedicine, public health, and systems transformation equips her with a unique perspective on how policy, healthcare delivery, and community needs intersect—particularly for marginalized populations.

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 733 - Sylvia Romm

At a time when mähū, LGBTQIA+, and QTPI+ communities continue to face significant health disparities and barriers to culturally competent care, Dr. Romm's expertise will be invaluable. Her background in advancing equitable healthcare solutions, combined with her collaborative and forward-looking approach, will strengthen the Commission's ability to advise state leadership and advocate for inclusive, effective policies.

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission is confident that Dr. Sylvia Romm will be a thoughtful, impactful, and dedicated member of the Commission. Her leadership and experience will help ensure that Hawai'i continues to lead with compassion, innovation, and a firm commitment to equity for all.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to support Governor's Message 733 and confirm Dr. Sylvia Romm.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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.

GM-733

Submitted on: 4/9/2026 2:58:02 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kainani Derrickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am submitting written testimony regarding the appointment of Dr. Sylvia Romm to the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission. I have come to know Dr. Romm through shared community efforts focused on the mental health and well-being of LGBTQIA+ young people and families. She brings not only relevant professional experience, but also a clear personal commitment to affirming, equitable, and community-centered care. Dr. Romm is someone I know to lead with integrity, compassion, and thoughtfulness. I believe she would bring meaningful perspective, sound judgment, and genuine dedication to service on the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,

Kainani Derrickson, LCSW

GM-733

Submitted on: 4/9/2026 4:09:45 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tandy Aye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Since her recent location to Hawai'i, Dr. Romm has been an advocate for gender diverse youth in the state. Her experience as a pediatrician and parent will be a benefit to the LGBTQ+ commission. She has also been an active member of the Hawai'i Gender-ECHO or G-ECHO team as well.

GM-733

Submitted on: 4/9/2026 6:18:31 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krysten Gonda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of Sylvia Romm's confirmation as a commissioner for the Hawaii State LGBTQ+ Commission. I met Sylvia when I relocated to Hawaii a few months ago and have been thoroughly impressed with her solution based mindset that I have seen as our friendship has developed. Sylvia is the type of person who sees possibilities through obstacles. She is a doer who works to make a change and I am confident that she will bring this mindset to her position on this commission. She has demonstrated this on numerous occasions from small instances such as planning social gatherings to larger circumstances concerning child and pedestrian safety and ideas to make our community improve and thrive. She will bring that same passion to this position as I know that working to improve needs and services within the LGBTQ+ community is something that she cares deeply about.

GM-733

Submitted on: 4/9/2026 7:05:25 PM

Testimony for HHS on 4/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brijit Reis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Brit Reis, and I am a pediatrician practicing in Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of Dr. Sylvia Romm's nomination to the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission.

I have known Sylvia as both a colleague and a friend, and I have seen firsthand her commitment to LGBTQ+ youth and their families. She has been an active force in connecting the medical community with Gender Journeys Day, a local conference supporting gender expansive individuals and families, and that kind of bridge-building reflects exactly who she is.

Dr. Romm will serve Hawai'i's LGBTQ+ community with expertise, dedication, and heart. I offer my wholehearted support.

GM-733

Submitted on: 4/10/2026 2:54:46 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Akiera Gilbert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I work alongside Dr. Sylvia Romm at Project HEAL, where she serves as Chair of the Board. Our organization is focused on mental health equity, particularly for LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities – and in that work, I’ve been fortunate enough to get to know both her skills and character. She is someone who – in every conversation and hard decision – goes out of her way to center the people most impacted. She listens first, asks how we can go beyond what we believe is possible to create the change that our community asks for. And when she doesn't have the answer, she's honest about it, and then she goes and finds the people and resources who do to ensure they are at the table.

In spaces where marginalized communities are actively under attack, it takes real courage and tremendous skill – she has both.

I also know her as someone with close family members who are gender expansive, and that personal connection runs through everything she does. I believe Dr. Romm would be a tremendous commissioner on the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission.

GM-733

Submitted on: 4/10/2026 4:54:10 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joan Zhang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair and Members of the Committee of Health and Human Services Hawaii State Senate,

I am writing in strong support of Sylvia for appointment to the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus Commission.

I have had the privilege of serving alongside Sylvia on the board of Project HEAL, a national nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to eating disorder treatment and recovery support. In that role, I have watched Sylvia consistently and passionately advocate for the communities most often left out of the conversation, those who face barriers to care not just because of their illness, but because of their identity, income, or background.

What strikes me most about Sylvia is that her advocacy is never abstract and her commitment is unwavering. She commits herself to the organization's mission and has stepped up consistently to advocate for our beneficiaries. Sylvia works tirelessly in service of this mission and she does it with a rare combination of courage and humility that I have seldom seen. When others were unable to step up, Sylvia stepped forward without hesitation, taking on leadership responsibilities to ensure our organization could continue its impact. She speaks up courageously for those without a voice, and yet she is always the first to ask how we can bring the right voices into the room rather than speaking over them. Sylvia never loses sight of the fact that true advocacy means centering those most affected and she backs that belief with her unique skills, her time, and her full commitment. She is exactly the kind of leader this Commission needs.

Sincerely,

Joan Zhang

Board Member, Project HEAL

GM-733

Submitted on: 4/10/2026 5:13:50 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Haylin Dennison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am honored to submit testimony in strong support of Dr. Sylvia Romm’s nomination to the Hawai‘i State LGBTQ+ Commission.

Dr. Romm is someone I deeply respect for her character, leadership, and unwavering commitment to LGBTQ+ communities. She leads with both heart and substance. She is thoughtful, deeply informed, and consistently grounded in equity, compassion, and service.

What stands out most to me is that Dr. Romm does not simply care in theory. She shows up in real ways for children, families, and communities, and she understands how important it is to create systems that are affirming, responsive, and just. I have every confidence that she would serve the people of Hawai‘i with excellence and integrity in this role.

I respectfully urge the Senate to confirm Dr. Sylvia Romm’s nomination.

GM-733

Submitted on: 4/10/2026 7:17:13 AM

Testimony for HHS on 4/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Wang-Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jennie Wang-Hall. I am a psychologist and former Chair of the Board of Project HEAL, a national nonprofit working at the intersection of mental health equity and community advocacy, and I am writing in strong support of Dr. Sylvia Romm's nomination to the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission.

I have worked closely with Sylvia in governance and I have seen firsthand how she leads: with rigor, with deep care for marginalized communities, and with an unwavering commitment to equity. She brought an intersectional lens to our work at Project HEAL that made our organization stronger, and I have no doubt she will bring that same quality to this commission.

Hawai'i's LGBTQ+ community will be well served by Dr. Romm. I offer my wholehearted support for her confirmation.

Mahalo,
Jennie Wang-Hall