

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Testimony of
Josh Green, M.D.
Governor, State of Hawai'i

Before the
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Tuesday, April 21, 2026
10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

In consideration of
Governor's Message No. 796

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on
Judiciary:

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Governor's Message No. 796, the appointment of Annalisa Bernard Lee to be a Circuit Court Judge of the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit (Island of Maui) for a term to expire in 10 years.

Judge Bernard Lee has served as a District Court judge for the island of Maui since 2022, when he was appointed. Prior to her confirmation to the bench, Judge Bernard Lee was a litigation associate at Wong Leong Cuccia and specialized in criminal and family law. She also served as a deputy prosecuting attorney for the County of Maui, a deputy public defender on both Maui and O'ahu, and served as a law clerk for Judges Michael Town and Derrick Chan.

I am confident that Judge Bernard Lee brings the necessary experience, integrity and a strong sense of service to the bench and I am pleased to offer my full support of her nomination.

Mahalo for your consideration.

GM-796

Submitted on: 4/16/2026 12:58:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/21/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gil Keith-Agaran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair

Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice-Chair

Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

I support the nomination of Annalisa M. Bernard Lee as Circuit Court Judge of the Second Circuit (which serves the islands and communities in Maui Nui). I was privileged to vote for her confirmation to her current position when I was a State Senator for Central Maui. I met Judge Bernard Lee shortly after she joined a private civil and family law firm with offices in the same building as my own law firm. She impressed me even then as a bright and hard-working younger lawyer who already was known as a skilled advocate.

She has been serving as a district court judge in our circuit for only a few years but has already earned a reputation as a fair, efficient and adept jurist. She brought a healthy amount of trial experience to the bench (both as a prosecutor and a public defender on Maui and Oahu) which I am confident will continue to serve her, the judiciary and the community well on the Circuit Court level.

As an aside. when confirmed and invested, Judge Bernard Lee will be the first Filipina to sit as a Circuit Court Judge on Maui. She will also be the first Filipino Second Circuit Court judge since Judge Artemio Baxa retired.

I urge you to recommend confirmation of her nomination to the entire State Senate.

Mahalo.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

By

Mark E. Recktenwald
Chief Justice, Hawai'i Supreme Court (ret.)

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 796, Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Circuit Court Judge of the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit (island of Maui), Gubernatorial Appointee, ANNALISA M. BERNARD LEE, for a term to expire in 10 years.

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee, I testify in strong support of the nomination of Annalisa Bernard Lee as a Circuit Judge of the Second Circuit. I have known Judge Bernard Lee since October, 2022, when I appointed her to serve as a district court judge on Maui. She has handled that role with professionalism, compassion, and speed.

Previously, she had extensive experience as both a deputy prosecuting attorney (for about ten years) and a deputy public defender (for about five years). She also got civil experience while working as an associate at a firm in private practice.

She has been active in the bar and the community as a whole, serving as member of the Permanent Committee on Rules of Penal Procedure and the Circuit Court Criminal Rules, as a board member of the Maui County Bar Association, and as a member of the Hawai'i State Bar Association's Committee on Diversity and Equity in the law.

Within the judiciary, Judge Lee is known as a team player, and a hard worker who willingly takes on additional tasks.

For all these reasons, I believe she will make an even bigger contribution if she is given the opportunity to serve full time on the circuit court, and respectfully urge you to approve her nomination.

Mahalo and aloha.

Dear Members of the Judicial Selection Committee,

My name is Małgorzata Przeciechowska, and I am a paralegal with Cain and Herren, a firm that regularly represents litigants in district court proceedings on Maui. In that capacity, I have had the opportunity to observe many judges and attorneys in action and I write today to offer my support for the appointment of Annalisa Bernard Lee to the Second Circuit Court. My perspective is someone who has watched her work from the other side of the courtroom, and it is precisely that vantage point that makes me confident this endorsement carries weight.

Courtroom proceedings can be heated, emotional, and deeply personal for the clients involved. Judge Bernard Lee never loses sight of that. She is firm when firmness is needed, but kind. She is thorough.

The litigants who will come before the Second Circuit deserve someone who will hear them fully and decide impartially. Based on everything I have witnessed in my years at Cain and Herren, I believe Annalisa Bernard Lee is that person.

The Second Circuit Court would be well served by her appointment, and I urge this Committee to give her nomination the serious and favorable consideration it deserves.

With respect,

Małgorzata Przeciechowska
Paralegal/Legal Assistant
Cain & Herren Team

CAIN HERREN & MCKELVEY

A LAW CORPORATION

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April 16, 2026

Via: USPS & Email: senrhoads@capitol.hawaii.gov

Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads
Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 228
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Letter of Support for the Appointment of Judge Annalisa M. Bernard Lee to Second Circuit Court Judge

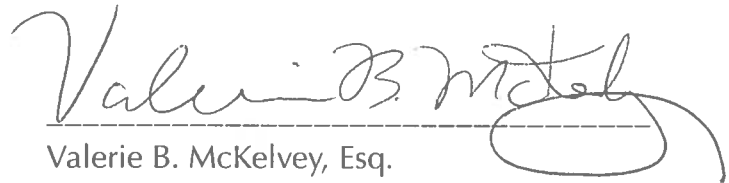
Aloha Senator Rhoads and Honorable Senate Judiciary Committee Members:

I write to you today to wholeheartedly recommend the Honorable Annalisa M. Bernard Lee for the appointment of a Circuit Court judgeship in the Second Circuit (Maui). I had the honor of working with Judge Bernard Lee on many cases in the District Court of the Second Circuit. She is fair yet firm and is dedicated to the pursuit of justice. She comes to the bench prepared and understands the intricate details of the cases before her. When she has questions, she asks. When she has concerns, she shares those concerns. When she makes rulings from the bench, she explains the reasons supporting those rulings. Her professionalism is exemplary - especially when handling *pro se* litigants who many be unfamiliar with the rules and appropriate court conduct - and she sets a shining example for all of us to strive for in the legal profession.

Before Judge Bernard Lee was appointed as a District Court Judge, she was my colleague and fellow defense counsel. I found her to be authentic, honest and a fierce advocate for her clients. I would expect nothing less from a fellow William S. Richardson graduate! For these reasons, and many more, I unequivocally and wholeheartedly recommend Judge Annalisa M. Bernard Lee to the appointment of a judgeship with the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should you have questions regarding our recommendation.

CAIN HERREN & MCKELVEY, ALC


Valerie B. McKelvey, Esq.

REVERE & ASSOCIATES, LLLC

A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW COMPANY
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April 14, 2026

Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee
c/o Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair of the Judiciary Committee

Re: Support for Judicial Appointment of Judge Annalisa Bernard Lee

Dear Senator Rhoads,

I write in strong support of Judge Annalisa Bernard Lee's appointment to the Second Circuit Court on Maui. I can say with confidence that Judge Lee is one of the most gifted, principled, and compassionate legal minds I have encountered. I have appeared before Judge Lee on a number of occasions. What I have appreciated most about appearing before Judge Lee is that her courtroom runs the way a courtroom should. She is prepared. She has read the briefs. She asks questions that get to the point, and she listens to the answers. Counsel on both sides are treated evenhandedly, and the litigants, who are often nervous and unfamiliar with the process, are treated with patience and basic human respect. That consistency matters more than people might realize. It sets the tone for everything that happens in that room. Her rulings are clear and well-reasoned. That kind of is something that not every judge takes the time to do. The move to the Second Circuit is a natural step for someone at her level. From everything I have seen, Judge Lee is more than ready for that. She brings steady, thoughtful approach that the circuit court calls for.

Judge Lee's deep ties to the Maui community further strengthen her candidacy. She understands the people who will appear before her, their hopes, their struggles, and the cultural values that shape their lives. She has devoted her career not merely to the practice of law but to the service of her community.

I offer this letter of support without reservation. Judge Annalisa Bernard Lee possesses the intellect, the integrity, the temperament, and the heart that our island needs. I am honored to recommend her and trust that this Committee will recognize in her the remarkable circuit court judge she is destined to be.

Judicial Appointment of Annalisa Bernard Lee to the Second Circuit Court

April 14, 2026

Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,

Magdalena Bajon

MAGDALENA BAJON
Revere & Associates, LLLC
A Limited Liability Law Company

Submitted by Peter Hume

Hello Mr. Rhoads,

Please add me to the list of those supporting Judge Annalisa Bernard Lee.

I'll keep it short and sweet. I have been a legal assistant in Wailuku for the past 15 years. I have known Annalisa on a professional level since she was an attorney, and now as a District Court judge. I have found her to be calm, communicative, professional, and focused on the pursuit of fair legal outcomes. I fully support her appointment to the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit.

Aloha,

Pete

GM-796

Submitted on: 4/18/2026 12:16:37 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/21/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eyke BrathHurdman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in support of Ms. Bernard Lee being confirmed as a Circuit Court Judge in the Second Ciruuit. Ms. Bernard Lee has the experience and judicial temperament to be fair and impartial. As a Maui resident from "Keiki to adult" she has deep community roots which fuel her love and desire to do what is Pono and right for our Maui constituents. As a fellow Native Hawaiian and woman I am proud to support her in this honor and believe she will also be supportive of our native community which can be disadvantaged and remain fair and impartial. Her devotion to her children and Ohana will also serve her well in extending this insight into her judgeship. Please confirm her appointment.

Anthony P. Takitani
Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran
David M. Jorgensen
Joseph L. Wildman

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TAKITANI, AGARAN, JORGENSEN & WILDMAN

A Limited Liability Law Partnership

April 20, 2026

senrhoads@capitol.hawaii.gov and
Hawaii Legislature Website

SENATOR KARL RHOADS
Hawaii State Senate
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Senate Committee on Judiciary Hearing April 21, 2026;
Appointment of Annalisa M. Bernard Lee for Second Circuit Court Judge

Aloha Senator Rhoads,

I'm sending this letter in strong support of the appointment of current District Court Judge Annalisa M. Bernard Lee to the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit, and I request that the Hawaii State Senate Committee on Judiciary confirm Judge Lee for that position.

I've known Judge Lee for the past several years and I've followed her career and referred clients to her many times. Her representation of those clients, her responsiveness, her substantial knowledge of the law, and her success in resolving and winning cases and now being an excellent District Court Judge has always been very impressive. I've never regretted sending clients to her and each of them has had only good things to say about her representation of them. Further, I've been involved in many Bar and general community activities over the years and Judge Lee has consistently been actively involved in causes critical to the people of Maui and to the legal profession.

Judge Lee takes great pride in her work and is always looking for ways to improve herself and the legal practice. She's done a great job as a District Court Judge and I know she'll make an excellent Circuit Court Judge.

We as members of the State Bar are always on the lookout for and encourage good, qualified lawyers to pursue becoming Judges and Judge Lee is a perfect example of someone we should not let get away! I apologize for not being able to attend the hearing in person, but I hereby humbly and respectfully ask that the Senate Committee on Judiciary confirm Judge Annalisa M. Bernard Lee to the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit.

~~Please let me know if you need any additional information and I sincerely thank you for your consideration of this request.~~

Sincerely,



DAVID M. JORGENSEN
Letters/Senate/Ltr in Support of Annalisa M Bernard Lee

GM-796

Submitted on: 4/20/2026 9:57:46 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/21/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cherie Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Annalisa always carries a strong sense of fairness, not just in big decisions, but in the quiet, everyday ways she listens, weighs, and cares. That steady integrity is something people feel immediately when they're around her. What stands out most to me is her ability to balance clarity with compassion. She does not rush to conclusions, and she never loses sight of the human side of any situation. She deeply cares about the Maui community, and I believe she brings pride to both her 'ohana and the island of Maui as she steps into this new role.



Testimony of the
HAWAII STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
relating to the nomination of

Annalisa M. Bernard Lee
Circuit Court Judge of the Second Circuit (GM796)

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Mark K. Murakami
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Tuesday, April 21, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016 and Videoconference
State Capitol

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) Board of Directors' comments on GM796, Nomination of Annalisa M. Bernard Lee for the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit.

After a rigorous process, described below, the HSBA Board of Directors concluded that Judge Bernard Lee is **QUALIFIED**. Judge Bernard Lee has served as a District Court Judge for the Second Circuit since 2022. Prior to sitting on the bench, she served as both a Deputy Public Defender and Deputy Prosecutor for more than fifteen years and additionally worked in private practice. She currently sits on the Committee to Increase Pro Bono Legal Services, in addition to the Judiciary Committee on Artificial Intelligence and the Courts. She is active in various volunteer organizations in her community.

The HSBA Board of Directors followed its multi-step process to arrive at its conclusion, which included:

- The nominee was notified of the HSBA appointment review process, which includes a questionnaire requesting educational credentials, legal and other professional work experiences, and personal references; a resume; a copy of the Judicial Selection Commission (JSC) application; a form authorizing disclosure from the Office of Disciplinary Counsel of any disciplinary action; and an interview with the HSBA Board of Directors.
- The HSBA membership received an electronic notification of the appointment and a request for comments on the nominee.
- A neutral fact-finding body comprised of three HSBA Board members was called upon to review documentation submitted by the nominee, contact references submitted by the nominee review comments received from the HSBA membership, conduct follow-up for clarification, if necessary, and prepare a report for the HSBA Board.

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Catherine A. Betts

- Judge Bernard Lee submitted documentation, which was reviewed, and the references listed were contacted for their personal opinions and observations. The comments and letters received from HSBA members reflected an affirmation of Judge Bernard Lee in all categories of the HSBA criteria, which include Integrity, Diligence, Legal knowledge and ability, Professional experience, Temperament, Financial responsibility, Public service, and Ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position.
- The Executive Director and I met with Judge Bernard Lee on April 16, 2026, to discuss the subcommittee's findings.
- On April 17, 2026, the HSBA Board of Directors interviewed Judge Bernard Lee in executive session.
- The HSBA Board deliberated and voted that Judge Bernard Lee was qualified.

Thank you for your time and allowing the HSBA to share our process and determination of qualification.