

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

Wednesday, April 22, 2026
9:40 a.m
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

In consideration of
Governor's Message No. 801

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. 801, the
appointment of Vladimir P. Devens to be the Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court
for a term to expire in 10 years.

Justice Devens was sworn in as an Associate Justice on the Hawai'i Supreme Court on
January 12, 2024. Prior to his appointment to the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Justice
Devens had a career in private practice for over 30 years where he concentrated his practice
in civil litigation in various areas of the law and served as a Director on the Hawai'i State Bar
Association Board.

At this time, it is important to ensure continuity and steady leadership in our courts, and
I am confident that Justice Devens is the right person for this position. He brings years of
experience, integrity, a strong sense of service to the bench, and a clear understanding of how
decisions impact everyday people. I am pleased to offer my full support of his nomination.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO HO'OPI'I
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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THOMAS J. BRADY
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
HOPE MUA LOIO HO'OPI'I

**THE HONORABLE KARL RHOADS , CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawai`i**

April 22, 2026

**REGARDING GM 801 — RELATING TO THE NOMINATION OF ASSOCIATE
JUSTICE VLADIMIR P. DEVENS TO SERVE AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE HAWAII`I
SUPREME COURT.**

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, my name is Steve Alm and I am the Prosecuting Attorney for the City and County of Honolulu. I respectfully submit this testimony in **strong support** of the nomination of Vladimir P. Devens to serve as Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

Justice Devens has demonstrated throughout his career a deep commitment to the rule of law, public service, and the fair administration of justice. He was sworn in as an Associate Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court in January 2024 following nomination by Governor Josh Green and unanimous confirmation by the Hawai'i State Senate. His appointment reflects the confidence of both the executive and legislative branches in his qualifications, integrity, and judgment.

Justice Devens brings to the Court a uniquely broad legal background that is especially valuable for a Chief Justice. Prior to joining the bench, he spent decades as a trial attorney handling complex litigation across a wide range of subject matters, including constitutional issues, wrongful death cases, and matters involving vulnerable victims. His extensive courtroom experience ensures a practical understanding of how legal decisions impact trial courts, attorneys, victims, and the public.

Justice Devens also brings firsthand law enforcement experience, having served as an officer with the Honolulu Police Department. This background provides him with a grounded perspective on public safety, accountability, and the real-world consequences of criminal conduct—perspectives that are critical to maintaining public trust in the judiciary.

At a time when the judiciary faces increasingly complex legal and societal challenges, it is essential to have leadership that is both grounded in real-world experience and capable of making clear, decisive judgments. Justice Devens brings that combination. His background as a trial attorney and law enforcement officer reflects a career spent making practical, high-stakes decisions—experience that translates into strong, thoughtful, and decisive judicial leadership. The courts require not only legal expertise, but leaders who can act with clarity, confidence, and an understanding of the real-world impact of their decisions. Justice Devens embodies those qualities.

In addition to his legal practice, Justice Devens has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to public service. He has served on the Hawai‘i Supreme Court Disciplinary Board, chaired the State Land Use Commission, and contributed to community-based efforts such as Crime Stoppers Honolulu. These roles reflect not only leadership, but also a deep understanding of the broader justice system and its intersection with the community.

As prosecutors, we appear in court daily and rely on a judiciary that is fair, thoughtful, and committed to the consistent application of the law. The Chief Justice plays a critical role not only in deciding cases, but also in administering the judiciary, setting policy, and ensuring that the courts function efficiently and transparently. Justice Devens’ combination of litigation experience, judicial service, and community involvement makes him exceptionally well-suited to lead Hawai‘i’s judiciary in this capacity.

Equally important, Justice Devens is a lifelong resident of Hawai‘i who understands the unique needs, values, and challenges of our community. His background reflects both professional excellence and a genuine connection to the people of this State.

For these reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney respectfully urges the Committee to support the nomination of Justice Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i Supreme Court. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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LATE

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



MICHAEL D. FORMBY
MANAGING DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKELE

KRISHNA F. JAYARAM
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O HO'OKELE

April 21, 2026

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Judiciary
415 S. Beretania St., Room 225
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City and County of Honolulu, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of GM 801**, submitting for consideration and confirmation the appointment of Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Hawai'i for a term to expire in ten years.

Associate Justice Devens earned the privilege to serve as Chief Justice from over 30 years of practical legal experience in the private sector, where he handled a wide breadth of legal cases requiring expertise in labor law, construction law, complex litigation, contract law, arbitration and appellate procedure. Of significance, Associate Justice Devens' intensive practice of labor law required an intimate understanding of administrative law, budgeting, financing, policies and procedures, dispute resolution, disciplinary actions, labor relations and management, all of which are particularly relevant to the position of Chief Justice.

On a personal note, I practiced law as opposing counsel to Associate Justice Devens and as co-counsel on a complicated federal tort claims act post-denial appeal. Whether opposing counsel or co-counsel, Associate Justice Devens acted with integrity, professionalism, collegiality and exemplary legal judgment.

The City and County of Honolulu values a strong and independent judiciary that upholds federal and state Constitutions and county Charters, protects individual rights, and ensures equal justice under law. We also prioritize justices, jurists and judges who bring a full-complement of legal experience earned through a broad and diverse history of civil and appellate practice. Associate Justice Devens fits these criteria perfectly and I am confident he will honorably serve the Judiciary and the people of the State of Hawai'i as Chief Justice.

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
April 21, 2026
Page 2

Should there be any questions, please contact me at mformby@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'mformby', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Formby
Managing Director

TESTIMONY OF EVAN OUE ON BEHALF OF THE HAWAI‘I ASSOCIATION FOR JUSTICE (HAJ) IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM 801

Date: April 22, 2026

Time: 9:40 a.m.

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Evan Oue, and I am presenting this testimony on behalf of the Hawai‘i Association for Justice (HAJ) in **STRONG SUPPORT of GM 801 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i State Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years.**

HAJ greatly appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Justice Devens. HAJ is confident in Justice Devens’s ability and commitment to preserving justice and the rule of law in Hawai‘i. His significant legal experience as a practicing attorney for nearly four decades makes Justice Devens the ideal candidate to sit on our State’s highest court.

Justice Devens has demonstrated a deep understanding of the law and a commitment to fairness and impartiality. His extensive background in all aspects of commercial litigation, constitutional law, and appellate practice, including serving as lead counsel in several high-profile cases before the Hawai‘i Supreme Court, positions him as an utmost qualified candidate.

Moreover, Justice Devens has exhibited a combination of a strong knowledge of the law, a superior legal analytical skill set, respect for the rule of law, and an immense attention to detail.

In his practice, Justice Devens has consistently set the standard for legal practice in Hawai‘i and led by example by demonstrating the ability to approach complex legal issues with fairness, impartiality, and a commitment to justice for all.

Furthermore, in his time as an associate justice, Justice Devens has distinguished himself on the Hawai‘i Supreme Court through a consistent record of thoughtful, well-reasoned opinions and a deep commitment to fairness, judicial integrity, and the rule of law. His work reflects a careful balance of legal rigor and practical understanding, ensuring that decisions are both grounded in precedent and responsive to the real-world impacts on Hawai‘i’s communities. Throughout his tenure, Justice Devens has demonstrated strong leadership, collegiality on the bench, and an unwavering dedication to upholding the principles of justice and public trust in the judiciary.

In addition to his vast legal knowledge, Justice Devens has evidenced a strong dedication to public service in nurturing Hawai‘i’s next generation of lawyers by serving as faculty of UH’s Trial Academy, as a volunteer attorney for Courts in the Community, and as a judge in many mock trial settings. He also demonstrated a commitment to Hawai‘i’s youth outside of the classroom, having served as a boxing, baseball, soccer, and softball coach. Additionally, Justice Devens is a prominent member of the Hawai‘i State Bar Association, having served as a Subcommittee Chair for the Bench and Bar Conference for many years. Justice Devens is a proven community leader, making him suited for Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i Supreme Court.

Accordingly, Justice Devens’s commitment to public service, integrity for the rule of law, and significant legal experience make him well suited for Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i Supreme Court. HAJ is confident that he will serve the people of Hawai‘i with the same standard of

excellence that he has exhibited throughout his legal career. For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to approve GM 801 and confirm Justice Devens's nomination as the Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court. Mahalo for your consideration.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evan Oue". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Evan Oue
Hawai'i Association for Justice
Executive Director



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 9:40 AM
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of GM801 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years.

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO ("UPW") is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue-collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties. The UPW also represents 1,500 members in the private sector.

UPW writes in **STRONG SUPPORT** of Governor's Message 801, which submits for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice to the Hawaii Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Nominee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years.

As a union leader, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Justice Devens in many cases where he has acted as attorney for UPW and its members. I have been repeatedly impressed not only with his knowledge of the law, acuity of his advice, and the acumen of his professional judgment but also with his dedication to serving justice and helping working families.

Justice Devens has handled complex legal matters with care and expertise. He has demonstrated a deep understanding of the law and a finely honed ability to apply it in ways that promote equity and fairness. Additionally, he has worked diligently to ensure that this union and its members are treated with respect and dignity within the courts and before other arbiters of fact and law.

Justice Devens has proven himself to be thoughtful, skillful, and persuasive. He always strives to achieve the best possible outcome, while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct. His work has been exceptional.

HEADQUARTERS

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Without question, his experience, excellence, and commitment to serving our community and the people of Hawaii make him a superb candidate worthy of an appointment as Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court. We humbly urge this committee to support Justice Devens' confirmation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kalani Werner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kalani Werner
State Director



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Judiciary

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

April 22, 2026

GM 801 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS CHIEF JUSTICE
OF THE HAWAII SUPREME COURT, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE IN 10 YEARS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the nomination of Vladimir P. Devens as the Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

Born and raised in Hawaii, Justice Devens brings a wide range of professional experience, including land use, permitting, law enforcement, labor relations, and constitutional matters. His perspective reflects the values and diversity of ordinary people, and his experience in criminal, civil, and business law is above reproach. We strongly believe that Justice Devens will bring a balanced and thoughtful point of view as the presiding officer of the Supreme Court and as the administrative head of the judicial system. His representation of both plaintiffs and defendants, combined with his extensive administrative background over a 35-year legal career, demonstrates his readiness for this role. Justice Devens consistently represents both himself and our community with integrity and professionalism, and he possesses the judicial temperament necessary to serve as Chief Justice.

During his tenure as a private attorney, Justice Devens worked in labor relations on behalf of working-class individuals. His confirmation presents a historic opportunity to have an advocate for organized labor and working families for the first time in our state's history. At a time when the challenges facing working families are too often overlooked, we are confident that Justice Devens will continue to represent the views and values of local citizens, as he has throughout his service as an Associate Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

For these reasons, we offer our unequivocal support and endorsement of Vladimir P. Devens nomination as Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court and respectfully request the favorable consideration of his candidacy by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

LATE

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/21/2026 12:21:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Padilla	Testifying for Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: Hawai'i Filipino Lawyers Association (HFLA)

RE: GM 801 Nomination of Vladimir Devens for Chief Justice

Aloha Senator Rhoads and members of Judiciary Committee,

My name is Daniel Padilla, President of the Hawai'i Filipino Lawyers Association with over 100 members practicing law in the State of Hawai'i. We are submitting our testimony in strong support for the confirmation of Associate Justice Devens to be the next chief justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

Justice Devens had worked as a policeman after graduating from law school and before practicing law and therefore has an extensive life experience working and dealing with our citizens and our community. As a civil attorney for nearly four decades, Vlad primarily represented victims and working people, including organized labor, practicing in the fields of personal injury, commercial litigation, land use and labor law. During his years of practice, Justice Devens earned a reputation as a skilled advocate in both trial and at the appellate level. He demonstrated an astute understanding of the law in pursuing zealous representation of his clients.

Justice Devens was also active in the legal profession and the community.

He remained actively involved in the Hawai'i State Bar Association (HSBA), serving as Subcommittee Chair for the Bench and Bar Conference for many years, as well as a contributing member of the HSBA board itself. He was also named as a member of the Disciplinary Board of the Hawai'i Supreme Court, the body that works with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, overseeing the ethical rules governing Hawai'i's licensed attorneys, protecting the general public, and recommending discipline and punishment to the High Court for bar members found violating the rules. He also served as coach for various sports organizations in the community. One of his most important voluntary position is to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Land Use Commission.

We believe that Justice Devens will be a great Chief Justice and will ensure that the the rule of law will be administered fairly to all the participants that appear before the Supreme Court.



2865 Pali Hwy Honolulu, HI 96817

www.nawahinetoa.org

April 21, 2026

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/measure_indiv.aspx?billtype=GM&billnumber=801&year=2026

Re: RECOMMENDATION – VLADIMIR DEVENS

Dear Senator Rhoads and Committee Members,

My name is Ilima-Lei Macfarlane, and I write in strong support of Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens for Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

I am a proud Native Hawaiian, born and raised in Hawai'i. Many people know me as a professional fighter and former Bellator world champion, but the work that matters most to me is the work I do in the community. Through Nā Wahine Toa, I have tried to stand up for Native women, for survivors, and for those who have felt powerless or unheard. That mission is deeply personal to me.

Justice Devens is someone I know not just by reputation, but through one of the hardest chapters of my life. When I made the decision to come forward about the sexual abuse I suffered as a child, I was carrying years of pain, fear, and silence. Vlad was my attorney, but he was also much more than that. He listened. He was patient. He treated me with compassion and respect. He never pushed me faster than I was ready to go. He explained every step of the process carefully, stood by me through the most difficult moments, and gave me strength when I needed it most. He made me feel heard, protected, and believed.

That process was not easy for me or for my family. It was painful, exhausting, and deeply personal. We were questioned, scrutinized, and attacked in public, and there were times when the weight of it all felt overwhelming. Through all of that, Vlad stood by our side. He did not back down, and he did not let us feel alone. He remained steady, thoughtful, and strong when we needed that most. He understood that seeking justice can come with a very real personal cost, and he helped us carry that burden with dignity.

What stood out to me then, and still stands out to me now, is that Vlad brought not only legal skill, but heart. He fought for me, my sister, and the other young women harmed by the same perpetrator with real conviction and courage. He gave voice to people who had suffered in silence for years. He understood that the law is not just about rules and procedure. It is also about people, dignity, and justice.

In the end, our perpetrator, Dwayne Yuen, was sentenced to more than 33 years in prison for child exploitation and harassment involving 10 victims. That result did not erase what happened, but it did bring accountability. It also helped protect other children and future potential victims from

OUR MISSION

The Nā Wahine Toa Foundation is dedicated to ending the missing and murdered indigenous women epidemic by empowering our native communities, women nation and youth.



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suffering the same harm. For those of us who lived through it, that mattered deeply. Vlad helped make that possible, and he did so with strength, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

That same character is one of the reasons I believe he is so well suited to serve as Chief Justice. Justice Devens has the intellect, judgment, and experience for the job, but he also brings something just as important: humanity. He understands people. He understands trauma. He understands that those who come before the courts are often facing some of the hardest moments of their lives. He has the rare ability to combine fairness, discipline, and thoughtful legal analysis with compassion and decency.

Since joining the Hawai'i Supreme Court, he has shown those same qualities on the bench. His work reflects fairness, deep consideration, and respect for the law and for all sides of a dispute. He has shown that he can approach difficult issues with care, independence, and integrity. To me, that is exactly what we should want in a Chief Justice.

I also believe Justice Devens understands Hawai'i in a real and meaningful way. He understands our communities, our values, and the importance of public trust. He knows that the judiciary must do more than issue decisions. It must serve the people of this State with fairness, humility, and wisdom. In my view, he is the right person to carry that responsibility forward.

I strongly and wholeheartedly support Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens for Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court. I respectfully ask that you give him your full consideration for this important position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ilima-Lei Macfarlane'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Ilima-Lei' being more prominent than the last name 'Macfarlane'.

Ilima-Lei Macfarlane

Founder

Ph: (808) 372-6619

Email: ilima@nawahinetoa.org

OUR MISSION

The Nā Wahine Toa Foundation is dedicated to ending the missing and murdered indigenous women epidemic by empowering our native communities, women nation and youth.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 9:40 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

By

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

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 801, Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years.

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee, I am honored to submit this testimony in strong support of the nomination of Vladimir Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

Justice Devens would bring to that position a unique combination of legal knowledge, decades of litigation and appellate experience, strong writing and verbal communications skills, a well-established record of public service, an off-the-charts work ethic, and a deep compassion for and understanding of the challenges faced by working people in Hawai'i.

I had the opportunity to observe Justice Devens for many years before he joined the Supreme Court as an Associate Justice. He was widely respected as one of Hawai'i's foremost labor lawyers—an area of the law in which I used to practice—and an extremely effective appellate lawyer who appeared before the court, including in a Courts in the Community event while hundreds of students observed.

Along with retired Justice Simeon Acoba, he was instrumental in reviving our bench-bar conferences, which have become the most effective means for sharing information between our judges, senior administrators, and members of the bar statewide. This took an incredible amount of work over many years, and the conferences now have hundreds of attendees and cover criminal, civil and family law, in the district and circuit courts.

Justice Devens was also a key member of the board of the Hawai'i State Bar Association, which partners with the judiciary in licensing of attorneys, the Courts in the Community Events, and in our Access to Justice efforts, including the Access to Justice Rooms across the state where volunteer attorneys help self-represented parties understand how to tell their side of the story when they get to court.

After he joined the Supreme Court, Justice Devens quickly established himself as a team-first colleague and an extremely productive, knowledgeable jurist. He prepares thoroughly for

oral argument, asks tough questions of both sides, calls it like he sees it, and then promptly prepares thoroughly-researched and well-written opinions.

Among his projects outside the courtroom, I asked him to co-chair a committee focusing on artificial intelligence and the courts. The committee conducted a detailed, comprehensive review and prepared a report which lays out a path to the future for the judiciary and the bar. Through that effort, Justice Devens worked with judges, court administrators and attorneys from across the state. By all accounts, he and his co-chair Judge John Tonaki established a very positive tone and game-plan for the committee to do its complex work, and then followed through on that plan.

In sum, Justice Devens has the skills, knowledge, character, work ethic and collaborative leadership style to excel as chief justice, and I enthusiastically support his nomination. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Testimony to the Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026 Regular Session

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 9:40 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

By

Robert D. S. Kim

GM 801, Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years.

As a retired Chief Administrative Judge of the Third Circuit, I respectfully present testimony in strong support of the Judicial Nominee VLADIMIR P. DEVENS for Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court. I am submitting this testimony as a private citizen.

I have known Justice Devens for many years in a professional capacity, in his capacity as a private practice litigator, as a director on the HSBA Executive Board, as a member of the Judicial Administration Committee, and in his capacity as a Supreme Court Justice.

Justice Devens is a highly respected Jurist in our legal community. His credentials are impeccable, and he has a reputation for fairness, common sense and respect for the rule of law. Justice Devens has a thoughtful demeanor and treats all who come before him with respect and humility. Justice Devens is widely respected by judges and attorneys alike. He is a man of integrity and calm temperament.

I support Justice Deven's nomination without reservation. I can answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you for the opportunity to support this very important nomination.



LATE

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A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW COMPANY

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April 21, 2026

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of Nomination of Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens
to Serve as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keani Alapa, and I am a law partner at Alapa & Otake. I write in strong support of the confirmation of Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

My support for Vlad is rooted in years of working with him closely and seeing firsthand the kind of lawyer, mentor, and person he is. I had the good fortune of being hired by Vlad as a law clerk after my first year of law school in 2009. From the beginning, I learned lessons from him that have stayed with me throughout my career: work hard, be prepared, act with integrity, be a zealous advocate for your client while never losing sight of your professional responsibilities, and give every client your best, whether the matter is large or small.

Vlad is exacting, and he should be. He is demanding in the best sense of the word because he understands that people often hire lawyers during some of the most difficult and emotional times in their lives, and they deserve the very best from the lawyers they trust to help them through it. Vlad has never treated legal work casually, and he never allowed the lawyers around him to do so. That standard changed my understanding of what it meant to practice law. I took that perspective back with me to law school, and it reshaped the way I approached this profession.

After law school, I joined Vlad's firm and worked for him until his appointment to the Court. During those years, I saw something that is increasingly rare in our profession: true mentorship. Vlad did not just supervise the young lawyers that worked for him like myself. He taught us. He invested in us. He believed experienced lawyers had a responsibility to pass on not only skills, but also standards, because the profession is stronger when the next generation is taught how to do the job the right way.

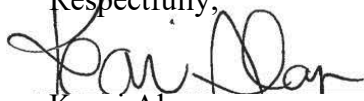
I benefited from that personally. I came into this profession with a lot to learn, and I was rough around the edges. I do not think I would have become the lawyer I am, or come as close to my potential as I have, without someone like Vlad to mentor me. He taught me that professionalism matters, especially when emotions run high and the stakes are real. He taught me that your word matters. He taught me that zealous advocacy does not require disrespect, and that integrity is not separate from good lawyering, it is part of it. He taught me that practicing law in Hawai'i is a privilege, and that with that privilege comes an obligation to clients, to the courts, and to the profession itself.

To this day, Vlad is the best lawyer I have seen in practice, not only because of how intelligent he is, but because of the kind of person he is. He brings sound judgment, professionalism, and basic decency to the work. When people talk about wanting a Chief Justice who is fair, steady, disciplined, and full of integrity, those are the very qualities I saw in Vlad, day in and day out, over many years.

That is why I believe he is exceptionally well suited to serve as Chief Justice. A Chief Justice must do more than know the law. The position requires judgment, steadiness, humility, leadership, and a deep respect for the role of the judiciary in the lives of the people it serves. The Chief Justice sets the tone for the courts. Vlad has the character and the temperament to set the right tone. He is careful without being indecisive, principled without being rigid, and demanding without ever losing sight of decency and respect. He understands that public confidence in the judiciary is earned through fairness, seriousness, and integrity, and he embodies those qualities.

Vlad also cares deeply about this profession and about Hawai'i. He is a local boy who understands this community, what it means to practice law here, and the importance of carrying out that work with honor and respect. Hawai'i would be well served by his leadership as Chief Justice.

For all of these reasons, I strongly urge the Committee to recommend confirmation of Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court. He has the intellect, work ethic, judgment, temperament, and integrity that this office demands, and I can think of no one more deserving of the Committee's support.

Respectfully,

Keani Alapa
Partner
Alapa & Otake

Testimony Hawai'i State Judiciary Committee
By Chuck Freedman
Confirmation on Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State
Supreme Court
April 22, 2026 9:40 AM

Senate Judiciary Chair Rhoads and distinguished
members:

I am here today to testify against the nomination of Vladimir Devens to be Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court. My objections stem from the concentration of power by the Hawai'i State Carpenters Union in all three branches of our government, with the appointment of Devens to Chief Justice being either a capstone or another notch in the gun for a single union, depending on your point of view.

Absolute power corrupts absolutely. We have watched this happen with the Carpenters Union, mostly in silence. It is time for the sirens to go off. Devens is already on the court; that is enough. He formerly represented the Carpenters. They and

their entities have clawed their way into the Governor's office where key staff including the Governor's Chief of Staff rose from the ranks of the Union. There is also no denying the various business and political connections of Deven's former law partner, now consultant, Andy Winer whose impacts on the fifth floor are common knowledge. We've all seen this year's bill that enriches the Carpenters Union with the little GOV footer at the bottom meaning it's part of the Governor's package. These are the short cuts of the ultra powerful. Not the rest of us.

I speak not of the Union's honorable membership, hardworking women and men whom we all respect. I do speak of the Union which, aside from the labor interests of its membership, is a major investor in developments around town, including Straub's overhaul (\$100 million dollars from them I hear). This in turn connects to the HMSA-HPH merger which is so potentially litigious in nature that we would be shocked to not see the proposal end up in our State Supreme Court.

And I speak of their variously named Super PACs and the singular power of their millions in turning elections, frequently through negative advertising. Let's not forget the settlement they made in 2014 in which Pacific Resources paid former Governor Ben Cayetano to end his lawsuit against them for libel and slander. So there are many moral as well as legal questions which may well land at the feet of our Supreme Court.

So where do roads converge here? I think you should ask Justice Devens questions like these: 1) If the huge Pacific Health and HMSA proposed partnership were litigated up and heard at the Supreme Court would your long term associations, with your law partner who I believe is a consultant for HPH and with the Union which is an investor, cause you to recuse yourself? 2) If the Union's Super Pac continues to try to buy elections and their actions end up before you, yes or no, would you recuse yourself? And 3) Though you twice did not publicly disclose your business relationship including four years on the Board of the Carpenters Super Pac "Be Change Now", you irrefutably had

one. Do you agree to recuse yourself from any and all Carpenters Union cases which will come before the court?

There are many more questions here. We depend on the Chief Justice not only for their knowledge of law, but for their awareness. Is this nominee self aware? Does he understand that some of the ground he comes from and stands on is shaky and even toxic. Familiar ground he failed to report.

A former Justice, Jim Wakasaki, once told me, "Chuck there is no such thing as complete power. Because once someone thinks they have it all, the revolution starts." Perhaps in a world where we search for philosophical bookends, that is the counterpart to "Absolute power corrupts absolutely." This committee must assure through clear eyes, good souls and hard questions that we have the right person for a job as important as any to the righteousness of our beloved land and people.

#FINAL#

Stanley H. Roehrig, Attorney at Law
101 Aupuni Street, Suite 124
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

LATE

April 21, 2026

Hawaii State Senate / Committee on Judiciary
Office of Senator Karl Rhodes, Chair
415 Beretania Street, Room 228
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Strong Support for the Confirmation of Vladimir Paul Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawaii State Supreme Court

Dear Chair Rhodes, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing to express my strong and unequivocal support for the confirmation of Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawaii State Supreme Court.

Justice Devens brings more than 30 years of legal experience, including civil litigation and public service. Since his appointment as an Associate Justice in 2024, he has demonstrated fairness, independence, and a deep respect for the rule of law. His work reflects both legal skill and a clear understanding of how the justice system affects communities across Hawai'i.

Governor Green has noted Justice Devens' "real-world experience" and "grounded" perspective - qualities that are especially important as residents face ongoing challenges related to affordability and economic stability. A Chief Justice must understand these realities, and Justice Devens has consistently shown that awareness.

He also brings a strong academic background and a commitment to the legal profession, including service with the Industrial Relations Law Journal and the Hawai'i State Bar Association. These contributions reflect his dedication to strengthening the legal system statewide.

The Chief Justice plays a critical role in overseeing court operations, improving efficiency, and ensuring access to justice for all. Justice Devens has expressed a clear commitment to these priorities, emphasizing fairness, accessibility, and responsiveness to the needs of Hawai'i's diverse communities. His experience and steady leadership position him well to guide the judiciary with integrity and effectiveness.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Justice Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Stanley H. Roehrig



Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Gemma G. Weinstein, President

Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President

Monday, April 20, 2026

Hawaii State Legislature
Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.

Re: GM 801 – Devens, Vladimir P. (Chief Justice, Hawai'i State Supreme Court)

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and Members:

UNITE HERE Local 5 – a local labor organization representing more than 10,000 hotel, health care and food service workers throughout Hawaii would like to offer comments in support of GM 801 and the appointment of Mr. Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court.

As an organization, we have closely observed Justice Devens' time in public service and have come to respect his ability to evaluate - in an impartial and measured way – the complex issues and perspectives that have come before the Court. We are confident that Justice Devens, if confirmed, will continue to serve in our community's best interest, and ask for your Committee's full support of GM 801.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cade M. Watanabe', written in a cursive style.

Cade M. Watanabe
Financial Secretary-Treasurer



April 20, 2026

Honorable, Karl Rhoads, Senate Committee on Judiciary, Chair
Honorable, Mike Gabbard, Senate Committee on Judiciary, Vice Chair
Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: GM 801- SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE HAWAII STATE SUPREME COURT, GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTEE, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE IN 10 YEARS.

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committee,

My name is Ana Tuiasosopo, and I am a Trustee and District Representative for the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 3, representing heavy equipment operators, mechanics, surveyors, and other skilled tradespeople in Hawai'i's construction industry. I submit this testimony in **strong support of GM 801.**

Justice Devens currently serves as an Associate Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court, having been sworn in on January 12, 2024 following unanimous confirmation by the Hawai'i State Senate. He brings to this leadership opportunity a wealth of experience grounded in decades of legal practice, public service, and community involvement.

Prior to his appointment, Justice Devens built a distinguished legal career as a respected trial attorney and founding partner of his own law practice, handling complex litigation across a wide range of areas including constitutional law, labor relations, land use, and appellate advocacy. He has argued cases at every level of Hawai'i's court system and has been trusted with high-stakes matters requiring sound judgment and careful analysis.

In addition to his legal accomplishments, Justice Devens has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to public service. He has served as Chair and Vice Chair of the State Land Use Commission, contributed to statewide public safety initiatives, and participated in the Disciplinary Board of the Hawai'i Supreme Court. Earlier in his career, he also served as a police officer with the Honolulu Police Department, further reflecting his dedication to the people of Hawai'i.

Justice Devens's leadership is defined by integrity, accountability, and a deep understanding of Hawai'i's legal and civic landscape. He has earned the respect of his peers for his ability to thoughtfully navigate complex issues, build consensus, and lead with fairness.

I respectfully urge your support for Vladimir Devens for this promotion.

Sincerely,

Ana Tuiasosopo
District Representative, Trustee
Operating Engineers Local 3



The Senate Committee on Judiciary

April 22, 2026

Room 225

9:40 AM

RE: Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Governatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years.

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), the exclusive bargaining representative for all University of Hawai'i faculty members across Hawai'i's statewide 10-campus system, submits this testimony in **strong support of GM 801**, the nomination of Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens to serve as the next Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

In March 2023, UHPA proudly supported Justice Devens's initial appointment to the Court as an Associate Justice. At that time, we highlighted his 35-year legal career in Hawai'i, which demonstrated his integrity, great depth of aloha, and profound knowledge of the law to secure major victories, including a \$30 million class-action settlement. We also noted that his local roots and past work as a police officer before pursuing his career as an attorney kept him well grounded. He has not lost touch with the real world, and his compassion for those facing real-life challenges truly sets him apart.

Deep Understanding of Labor and Working People. Justice Devens brings an invaluable perspective to the Court: a deep, practical understanding of how the law affects working people, government institutions, and labor relations throughout Hawai'i. Before his appointment, he spent decades in the trenches representing unions and public employees. He successfully guided labor organizations through complex strategic and legal matters, helping to secure major gains in wages, hours, and working conditions. Representing public employees requires a steady understanding of the balance between labor rights, public responsibility, and accountability—a balance he continues to demonstrate on the bench.

A Commitment to Judicial Independence and Fairness. In our previous testimony, we noted that in an age when judicial independence has become a major concern in our country, and there are unprecedented threats to our government's system of checks and balances, Justice Devens is a breath of fresh air. He has never shied away from difficult cases, even in Hawai'i's

University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly



small, close-knit community. His track record clearly shows he is driven by fairness and upholding the law, rather than by what is politically expedient. Since taking the bench, his performance on the Court has fully justified our confidence in these qualities. His written opinions span a broad range of complex legal issues—including employment discrimination, workers' compensation, and due process—reflecting a justice who approaches every matter with care, restraint, and intellectual honesty.

Deep Community Ties and Demonstrated Leadership. A Chief Justice must not only be a fair jurist, but also a steady leader who understands the community they serve. Justice Devens has a deep commitment to giving back to the community and making Hawai'i a better, safer place to live. Over the years, he has served on the boards of the Hawai'i State Bar Association and Crimestoppers of Honolulu, and volunteered as a coach for youth soccer and softball. Since joining the Court, he has also proven his capability for institutional leadership. For example, he demonstrated exceptional vision as co-chair of the Judiciary's Committee on Artificial Intelligence and the Courts, helping the judiciary proactively navigate how technology can safely serve the public and court operations. This reflects the exact type of thoughtful, practical leadership required of a Chief Justice.

Justice Devens possesses the intellect, real-world experience, temperament, and unquestionable integrity required for this office. UHPA strongly urges the Committee to recommend confirmation of Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens to serve as the next Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

**University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly**



LOCAL 142

INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION

LOCAL OFFICE • 451 ATKINSON DRIVE • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814 • PHONE 949-4161

HAWAII DIVISION: 100 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii 96720 • **OAHU DIVISION:** 451 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
MAUI COUNTY DIVISION: 896 Lower Main Street, Wailuku, Hawaii 96793 • **KAUAI DIVISION:** 4154 Hardy Street, Lihue, Hawaii 96766
HAWAII LONGSHORE DIVISION: 451 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

The Thirty-Third Legislature
Regular Session of 2026

THE SENATE

Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
April 22, 2026 9:40 a.m.

**TESTIMONY OF THE HAWAI‘I LONGSHORE DIVISION ILWU
IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM801
CONFIRMING VLADIMIR P. DEVENS AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE HAWAI‘I STATE
SUPREME COURT FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE IN 10 YEARS**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai‘i Longshore Division strongly supports the confirmation of Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i State Supreme Court.

For working men and women across Hawai‘i, the judiciary plays a critical role in protecting labor rights, ensuring fair treatment, and upholding the rule of law. Decisions made at the highest level of our courts directly impact workers, families, and the economic stability of our communities. It is essential that the Chief Justice understands these real-world impacts.

Mr. Devens brings the integrity, judgment, and commitment to fairness necessary to lead Hawai‘i’s judiciary. His confirmation will help ensure that our courts remain balanced, independent, and accessible to all—especially the working people who rely on them for justice.

We respectfully urge the Committee on Judiciary to advance his confirmation.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dustin Dawson
Director
Hawai‘i Longshore Division ILWU



HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 597-1441 • Fax: (808) 593-2149

April 22, 2026

The Thirty-Third Legislature
The Senate
Committee on Judiciary

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM801 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE HAWAII’I STATE SUPREME COURT, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE IN 10 YEARS

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO is in strong support of GM801, confirming Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai’i State Supreme Court.

Justice Devens’ record reflects a career grounded in fairness, discipline, and respect for the law. His more than three decades of legal experience, including work across civil litigation, labor-related matters, and public service, has required him to evaluate complex issues from multiple perspectives and apply the law consistently.

His experience representing both plaintiffs and defendants demonstrates an ability to weigh competing arguments without predisposition. That balance is evident in how he approaches legal questions, with attention to both the legal framework and the real-world consequences of decisions.

Additionally, his work in labor and employment matters, combined with broader public service experience, reflects a practical understanding of how the law affects people in their daily lives. That perspective is important, but his record shows that it has not come at the expense of impartiality. His approach has remained measured, even-handed, and rooted in the facts and the law.

Justice Devens has established a record that supports this appointment, and we respectfully urge the committee to confirm his nomination.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Perreira". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Randy Perreira
President
Hawaii State AFL-CIO



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Cheney Kaku
Secretary-Treasurer

Andrea Eshelman
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Item: GM801 – Relating to Confirmation of Vladimir. P. Devens – Chief Justice, Hawai'i State Supreme Court

Position: Support

Hearing: Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 9:40 am, Room 225

Submitter: Osa Tui, Jr., President - Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) stands in strong support of the appointment of Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court.

Associate Justice Devens is widely respected for his litigation experience and work in collective bargaining and employment law. His legal work reflects a deep command of Hawai'i statutes and case law, an ability to quickly identify core issues, and a thoughtful approach to strategy grounded in real-world consequences.

On the Hawai'i Supreme Court, Associate Justice Devens has demonstrated integrity, sound judgment, and professionalism. His opinions are clear, well-reasoned, and grounded in thorough consideration of the law. His judicial temperament reflects fairness and wisdom, remaining calm, respectful, and deliberate.

As Chief Justice, Justice Devens would provide steady, principled leadership to Hawai'i's judiciary and continue the important legacy of former Chief Justice Mark E. Recktenwald, who invested significant time and energy in building public trust and confidence in the courts. Justice Devens understands that the role requires not only legal excellence but effective administration, collaboration, and stewardship to ensure the judiciary functions efficiently, fairly, and with integrity.

For these reasons, HSTA strongly supports Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens and respectfully urges the committee to give him your highest consideration. For these reasons, HSTA respectfully urges the Committee to support his confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Rosalee Agas-Yuu, RN
President

1600 Ala Moana Blvd Suite 100
Honolulu, HI 96815
Tel: (808) 531-1628
Fax: (808) 524-2760

In Strong Support of GM 801: Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years.

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Committee Members from the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

We are in **strong** support of Gubernatorial Appointee, Vladimir P. Devens to serve as a Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court.

With all his extensive experience in Hawaii's State courts over the years and representing numerous members of our community, Justice Devens' leadership will ensure our judiciary branch is taken care of over the next ten years.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong** support of GM 801.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosalee Agas-Yuu

Rosalee Agas-Yuu

President, Hawai'i Nurses' Association, OPEIU Local 50



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**IBEW LOCAL 1260 — TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE HAWAII SUPREME COURT
JDC Hearing — Wednesday, April 22, 2026 — 9:40 AM**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1260, we respectfully submit testimony in **support** of the appointment of Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

IBEW Local 1260 represents approximately 3,000 members across Hawaii and Guam, including approximately 1,100 members who work in Hawaii's electric utility system. Our members are local skilled workers who live here, raise families here, and help keep essential services operating safely and reliably for our communities.

Associate Justice Devens brings substantial legal experience, public service, and a practical understanding of Hawaii's people and institutions. His background reflects both professional achievement and a grounded appreciation for the everyday realities facing working families. We believe those qualities are important in a Chief Justice, whose responsibilities extend beyond deciding cases to also leading the administration of the statewide court system.

At a time when Hawaii faces serious challenges involving affordability, housing, public trust, and access to justice, steady and credible leadership in the judiciary matters. The Chief Justice helps set the tone for the administration of the courts, including their efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness to the public. We believe Associate Justice Devens has the experience, temperament, and perspective necessary to serve effectively in that role.

For these reasons, IBEW Local 1260 respectfully urges the Committee to recommend confirmation of Associate Justice Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

LATE

THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, April 22, 2026
TIME: 9:40 AM
PLACE: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

PHOTO ID REQUIRED FOR ENTRANCE TO THE STATE CAPITOL
BUILDING HOURS: 7AM TO 5PM, MONDAY - FRIDAY

The Legislature is accepting written, videoconference, and in-person testimony at public hearings.
A live stream of all Senate Standing Committee meetings will be available on the [Senate YouTube Channel](#).

A G E N D A

GM 801

Status &
Testimony

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice of JDC
the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, gubernatorial appointee,
VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years.

Decision Making to follow, if time permits.

Justice's Past Political Activity Is Raising Fresh Questions For Some Senators

The Senate is considering whether to confirm Vladimir Devens for the position of Supreme Court chief justice.

By [Chad Blair](#) / April 20, 2026

The nomination of Vladimir Devens to be Hawai'i's next Supreme Court chief justice is scheduled for a hearing this week amid new concerns over his past leadership of a political action committee that spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to elect Gov. Josh Green.

Karl Rhoads, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, told Civil Beat Friday that he is concerned Devens did not disclose in his confidential [Judicial Selection Commission](#) application last week that he spent four years on the board of Be Change Now, the super PAC operated by [Public Resource Partnership](#), which represents the Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters and more than 250 of Hawai'i's top contractors.

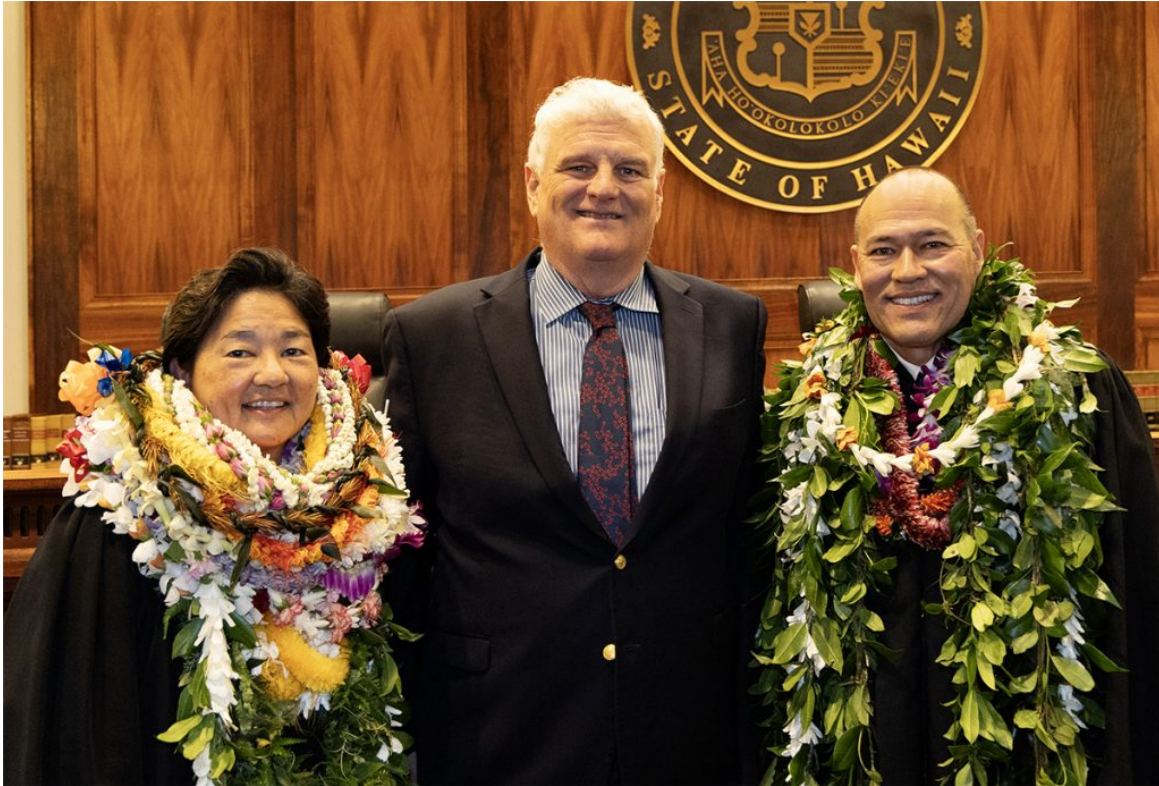
Devens also did not disclose his PAC position in 2023 when Green nominated him for a seat on the state's highest court.

Civil Beat reported the super PAC connection [in November 2023](#), just one day after the full Senate confirmed Devens to be an associate justice.

Devens' confirmation hearing for chief justice [is scheduled for Wednesday](#).

"I am sure the topic will come up," said Rhoads. "We'll have to see what his explanation is."

Devens did not reply to an inquiry Friday.



Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald, center, welcomed Associate Justices Lisa Ginoza, left, and Vladimir Devens, right, to the Hawai'i Supreme Court in January 2024. Devens has been nominated to be the new chief justice. (Hawai'i State Judiciary)

In the 35-page notarized application, Devens doesn't list Be Change Now as one of the organizations he's been affiliated with in the past.

However, he does mention it in response to this question: "What, if anything, in your background and experience, both personal and professional, might, if disclosed, could bring negative reactions during the Senate confirmation process and adversely affect your nomination to the court?"

This section then states, "**We will require you to disclose all such action or state that there is none, and, when in doubt, it is best to disclose.**"

Devens identified two complaints about him with the Office of Disciplinary Council by former clients and a third from a land developer when Devens was on the Land Use Commission. All three were dismissed, he said.

Devens then concluded this section of the application with this statement: “After I was confirmed by the Senate in 2023, the media outlet Civil Beat published an article stating that I had not disclosed a prior membership on a political action committee. I believe the relevant question on the application related to present affiliations. I had already stepped off that committee before applying to the judiciary, however, the committee’s DCCA filings apparently had not been updated and still had me listed which I was unaware of.”

Devens applied for the associate justice position on Nov. 23, 2022, just weeks after Green’s election and about a month after the Judicial Selection Commission said it was accepting applications to fill the soon-to-be-vacated seats of Associate Justices Paula Nakayama and Mike Wilson. There are [five justices on the court](#).

The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs listed Devens in business registration filings as a director of Be Change Now from April 2019 until April 2023.

In the 2023 Civil Beat article, Lee Tokuhara, communications director for Be Change Now, said Devens served on the Be Change Now board “from May 2018 and resigned in 2022, and his role was legal in nature.”

Now, the link between Devens and the super PAC that campaigned so heavily on behalf of the governor is raising fresh concerns because he again did not list the PAC on the new application.

Between June and October 2022, Be Change Now spent just over \$500,000 on advertisements supporting Green’s campaign for governor, according to data from the Campaign Spending Commission. Another PRP super PAC, For A Better Tomorrow, is now spending heavily on behalf of Kaua’i Mayor Derek Kawakami.

The DCCA registration in 2023 listed Devens along with another director, Kyle Chock, and Joshua Magno, the chair, secretary, treasurer and a director of Be Change Now. Devens also identified Chock as a reference in his application for associate justice.

Devens does not include Chock as a reference in his application for chief justice. And, though he says now he does not believe he was required to disclose a past board association, he does list past memberships in his application with a half-dozen professional organizations including Consumer Lawyers for Hawai’i and two charitable groups, CrimeStoppers of Honolulu and Palolo Boxing Club.

Asked about the omission, Green sent a statement via email Friday about his nominee, who he [announced earlier this month](#).

“I nominated Justice Devens because of his integrity, experience and proven leadership on the bench,” he said. “He was thoroughly vetted during his 2023 confirmation and has complied with all disclosure requirements. I’m confident the Senate will again recognize that he is exceptionally well qualified to serve as Chief Justice.”

From Labor Lawyer To Chief Administrator

Devens is a 1980 graduate of Kalani High School on O’ahu. He earned his law degree in 1987 from the University of California Berkeley School of Law.

Prior to becoming an associate justice, Devens ran his own law practice. His clients included the Hawai'i State Teachers Association, the State of Hawai'i Organization of Police Officers, United Public Workers, the Hawai'i Fire Fighter Association, and the Hawai'i Government Employees Association.

The chief justice is a far more important position than an associate justice. The chief oversees the entire state judiciary, which includes the ICA, the district and circuit courts and specialized courts. The judiciary employs about 1,700 people and the [responsibilities of the chief justice](#) include selecting district court judges and also assigning judges to serve in a temporary capacity on all courts.

The chief justice is the administrator of a bureaucracy that has an annual operating budget of about \$215 million. The chief also submits to the Legislature annual routine repair and maintenance reports for judiciary-owned buildings, facilities and other improvements. The judiciary's proposed capital improvement budget for the next fiscal year is around \$45 million.

It has been difficult to attract candidates to be chief justice, and the Judicial Selection Commission had to extend the deadlines and solicit potential applicants.

These Senators need people to elect them. Tell them to do their job and vote NO.

Kouchi, Ronald D. 586-6030
Awa, Brenton 586-7330
Chang, Stanley 586-8420
Dela Cruz, Donovan M. 586-6090
Elefante, Brandon J.C. 217 586-6230
Fevella, Kurt 586-6360
Fukunaga, Carol
Gabbard, Mike 586-6830
Ihara, Jr., Les 586-6250
Inouye, Lorraine R. 586-7335
Kanuha, Dru Mamo 586-9385
Keohokalole, Jarrett 587-7215
Kidani, Michelle N. 586-7100
Kim, Donna Mercado 587-7200
Lee, Chris 587-8388
Moriwaki, Sharon Y.
Rhoads, Karl 586-6130
Richards, III, Herbert M. "Tim" 586-6760
San Buenaventura, Joy A. 586-6890
Wakai, Glenn 586-8585
Lamosao, Rachele. 586-6970
McKelvey, Angus L.K. 586-6070
DeCorte, Samantha 586-7793
DeCoite, Lynn 587-7225

 Respect  Reply  Share

- **PonoAloha** 2 days ago

Good news? He is a lawyer with many political ties beginning with his father having been former Managing Director under Fasi, then representation of nearly all of the strongest Unions noted in Hawai'i, and part of a PAC force electing Green. Double payback, confirmed Associate Justice with less than 2 years experience (several recusals due to conflict of intrrest), now, nominated again by Green to the highest position as Chief Justice. Funny thing, lawyers, they have a way of indirectly answering a direct question. Dare his confirmation hearing be thorough or just going thru the motions?

 Respect 22  Reply  Share

 Report

- **manoafolk** 2 days ago

Devens also did not disclose his PAC position...

A judge who hides or disguises his background is going to be a sneaky judge. Does the judiciary need back room dealings?

 Respected 38  Reply  Share

 Report

 [Profile & Replies](#)

 [Top of comments](#)

 [Top of page](#)

Joseppi 1 day ago

"the link between Devens and the super PAC that campaigned so heavily on behalf of the governor is raising fresh concerns - Devens clients included the Hawai'i State Teachers Association, the State of Hawai'i Organization of Police Officers, United Public Workers, the Hawai'i Fire Fighter Association, and the Hawai'i Government Employees Association"

Fresh concerns, how about a tad bit of outrageousness.

Here we have an example of the Justice System being infiltrated by a hired lobbyist for two of the most powerful forces in Hawaii - the Bureaucracy and the Construction Industry, and it can be rationally assumed that Devens would favor these state institutions in any cases brought before him.

History has so many examples of when a Judicial system loses its independence and separation of power from the business and political forces that rule over a sovereignty, that the court system inevitably becomes a facade for justice, and instead becomes a tool for authoritarianism.

We already see it on the National level, with court decisions blatantly favoring corporations and partisan politics.

Perhaps we the people here in Hawaii, can stop it?

 **Respected 24**  Reply  Share

 Report

KalihiValleyHermit 1 day ago

I thought it was already problematic enough that Devens was appointed associate justice, with **zero** experience as a judge at any level. And now, he's being nominated for Chief Justice, barely 2 years later? If he's confirmed, he would have, by far, the thinnest resume on the bench since the state Judicial Selection Commission was created in 1978.

And now, a lack of transparency in disclosing his prominent position in the Be Change Now PAC that supported Josh Green's campaigns for Lt. Governor in 2018 & Governor in 2022? Can the appearance of a conflict of interest here be any worse?

But who cares what I think? Devens easily sailed through the State Senate confirmation process in 2024 by a 21-0 vote. Seems poised to do so again on his second rodeo, as I've not heard any rumbling or grumbling at the State Capitol. Stay tuned.

 **Respected 41**  Reply  Share

 Report

mycomments 1 day ago

Hmm the PAC that backed unknown Green for governor. Same PAC backing Kawakami. They must be happy Luke is not running.

 **Respected 20**  Reply  Share

 Report

In politics the first question is 'qui bono?' Anyone attacking anyone has a motive, and it's often ulterior.

 Respect 7  Reply  Share

 Report

— **Unco_Grumpelstiltskin** 16 hours ago

 In reply to **Unco_Grumpelstiltskin**

sight should read "side" for anyone thrown by our auto-correct-internet slop misspellings.

 Respect  Reply  Share

 Report

— **bochatime808** 1 day ago

There's more to the Carpenters super pac than these isolated stories about individuals. Civil beat should investigate how they've managed to infiltrate government at every level from the executive branch, mayors office, legislative branch, judiciary, and council level.

 Respected 32  Reply  Share

 Report

— **Natalie_Iwasa** 1 day ago

In the 2023 Civil Beat article, Lee Tokuhara, communications director for Be Change Now, said Devens served on the Be Change Now board "from May 2018 and resigned in 2022,"

An important question here is, "what was the actual date of resignation?"

 Respect 16  Reply  Share

 Report

— **ZiggysKid** 24 hours ago

 In reply to **jeriatricks**

Its a no for me too.

 Respected 4  Reply  Share

 Report

— **funnykine** 1 day ago

The individuals who are in the best position to understand Justice Devens' readiness to assume the role of Chief Justice are the very people who cannot safely comment: the judges and attorneys who work with him, appear before him, or practice in the Supreme Court chambers. Because they may one day be subject to his decisions, they are not in a position to offer testimony about his suitability for this role, even though they would have the most direct insight into his professional experience.

 Respect 17  Reply  Share

 Report

— **Unco_Grumpelstiltskin** 1 day ago

Disclosure is usually the right sight to err on for these sorts of things, just speaking professionally.

It doesn't mean Devens did anything wrong, but not disclosing certainly reduces his 'defenses' to potential accusations now.

In politics the first question is 'qui bono?' Anyone attacking anyone has a motive, and it's often ulterior.

— **Joseppi** 1 day ago

↳ In reply to **Natalie_Iwasa**

Reasonable people would think such, but those defending a personal political bias would not entertain such doubts. Their biases wouldn't allow it.

👍 Respect 3 ↳ Reply 🗨️ Share

🚩 Report

— **Natalie_Iwasa** 1 day ago

↳ In reply to **Joseppi**

That's a problem for someone in this situation, isn't it?

👍 Respected 12 ↳ Reply 🗨️ Share

🚩 Report

— **RICK** 1 day ago

Move along there is nothing to see here. Just more of the usual.

👍 Respect 4 ↳ Reply 🗨️ Share

🚩 Report

— **jeriatricks** 1 day ago

I vote NO....

👍 Respected 9 ↳ Reply 🗨️ Share

🚩 Report

— **SillyState** 1 day ago

Red flags.

👍 Respected 13 ↳ Reply 🗨️ Share

🚩 Report

— **Ainokea** 1 day ago

why is it an issue Sen Rhoads when you are fine with enacting legislation to unmask ICE agents, not cooperate with Fed laws, etc ? and we all know none of these will pass Feds and Courts. We like to waste time and money and resources to appease a vocal minority group for optics at expense of silent majority. If he did something wrong, fine call it out ? so what was wrong here ? not ideal yes but any legal issues. irony of it Rhoads passing for illegals and silent there and moaning here , seriously

👍 Respect 2 ↳ Reply 🗨️ Share

🚩 Report

— **CaptainMandrake** 1 day ago

↳ In reply to **Ainokea**

I support Senator Rhoads's effort to rein in ICE/CBP by bringing some measure of accountability to their behavior and make them conform to normal public servant behavior like every other law enforcement agency, federal, state and county. There's now a long track record of these agencies engaging in clearly illegal activities, including kidnapping, murder and excessive use of force (i.e., police brutality).

In the case of Justice Devens, I doubt there's a "silent majority" (apologies to Richard Nixon) who support what clearly appears to be unethical behavior, which may be legal but hardly a shows the kind of character, one would want in the person heading our state's judicial system.

👍 Respect 10 ↳ Reply 🗨️ Share

🚩 Report

Ca 20 hours ago

Not disclosing something so significant. 'dismal that it had to take this step in the selection process for this to be discovered. May the legislators do the right thing.

 **Respected 6**  Reply  Share

 Report

WorkingPeasants 1 day ago

Hewa! All the other akamai attorneys with no connection to the PRP hui never got a chance. Governor Josh Green and his hui controlling Hawaii more and more. Enough Already!!!

Senators you better do your job and vote NO or stay home.

- **Vladimir Devens:** Associate Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court (**Nominated**).
- **Lance D. Collins:** Attorney, Law Office of Lance D. Collins.
- **David M. Forman:** Co-director of the University of Hawaii Manoa's environmental law program.
- **Benjamin E. Lowenthal:** Attorney.
- **Sabrina S. McKenna:** Associate Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

 Respect 8  Reply  Share


 Report

— **LoloErudite** 13 hours ago

 In reply to **WorkingPeasants**

David Foreman, would have been excellent.

— **ZiggysKid** 24 hours ago

 In reply to **Ainokea**

He did do something wrong by failing to disclose.

If thats the kind of attention to detail he will bring as chief justice, fail.

 **Respected 13**  Reply  Share

 Report

— **BennyR** 1 day ago

The irony is, the State argued that unless it gives judges 50% raises, they won't be able to attract the "best" people to the bench. But after the raises were approved, we ended up with the same old, same old anyway (political ties). This whole thing is shibai. But, Hawaii deserves what it votes for, and our politicians know that voters will never demand change.

 **Respected 13**  Reply  Share

 Report

— **Natalie_Iwasa** 1 day ago

One would think that someone who works with the idea of "beyond a reasonable doubt" would disclose such relationships "in an abundance of caution," as some politicians like to say.

 **Respected 22**  Reply  Share

 Report

|

Joseppi 9 hours ago

"Green nominated him for a seat on the state's highest court - the link between Devens and the super PAC that campaigned so heavily on behalf of the governor is raising fresh concerns"

Ya tink, the links are obvious to anyone who can put two and two together.

 **Respected 6**  Reply  Share

 Report

WhatMeWorry 11 hours ago

"Devens did not disclose in his confidential Judicial Selection Commission application last week that he spent four years on the board of Be Change Now, the super PAC operated by Public Resource Partnership, which represents the Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters and more than 250 of Hawai'i's top contractors."

Accidental "whoopsie" or concerted plan? Methinks the latter.

 **Respected 3**  Reply  Share

 Report

Fred_Garvin 19 hours ago

Unlike used car salesmen or sidewalk vendors selling luxury brands, you expect the next chief justice to tell you the truth, especially under oath.

 **Respected 6**  Reply  Share

 Report

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/18/2026 6:27:45 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Blaine J. Kobayashi	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Judiciary Committee, I would strongly support the appointment of Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

I met Justice Devens years ago when he served on the Land Use Commission. He always treated me, and everyone else who appeared before the Commission, with the utmost respect and courtesy.

His intellect was reflected through insightful and succinct questions, and was done so with humility and no hint of arrogance. He always demonstrated excellent demeanor, and made decisions only after careful and thoughtful consideration of all the information presented to him. He continued to do so while in private practice as well as in his current position as an Associate Justice.

I am confident Justice Devens is qualified to make him the next Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

Mahalo for taking the time to consider this testimony.

Sincerely,

Blaine J. Kobayashi

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/20/2026 2:01:01 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melvin Fujino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Justice Devens will serve well as the Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i Supreme Court. He possess all of the qualities of a great leader and supporter of the people of Hawai‘i within the bounds of the law. He will not be influenced by those with selfish motives for their own personal gain but rather he will make decisions based on the rule of law and he will be very diplomatic in doing so. He is very approachable and professional.

Justice Devens appeared before me when I was a Third Circuit Court Judge. I had and continue to have the utmost respect for him because of his humility, integrity and preparedness for his cases.

I strongly support Justice Devens for Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i State Supreme Court.

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/20/2026 11:47:30 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gilbert S.C. Keith- Agaran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair, and

Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of GM 801 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Justice Devens. I practice law at a small law firm in Wailuku, Maui. I have known Justice Devens since we were classmates at the Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California at Berkeley, now known as Berkeley Law School (we were two of the three students in our class from Hawai'i).

I applauded and supported Governor Josh Green's appointment of Mr. Devens as an Associate Justice in 2023. I now commend the Governor's wisdom in nominating Justice Devens for Chief Justice. I am confident in Justice Devens's ability and commitment to preserving and pursuing justice and the rule of law as he has done throughout his working life since returning to the islands.

In law school, I knew that Mr. Devens hailed from a family of lawyers—his father served as corporation counsel for the City and County of Honolulu and his sister sat as a District Court Judge. Yet shortly after we passed the Hawai'i Bar (he took the 1987 Summer Bar while I took the 1988 February Bar after sitting for the California Bar the summer before), he joined the Honolulu Police Department. He patrolled as a beat cop and then the Vice Squad for approximately six years, working hands on in enforcing the criminal law.

He could have stayed in the police department as a career and risen in the ranks, but he returned to private legal practice. While I am sure he had an opportunity to join his father's respected boutique Bishop Street law firm, Justice Devens chose to carve out his own path. As a civil attorney for nearly four decades, Vlad primarily represented victims and working people, including organized labor (HSTA, SHOPO, and other unions), practicing in the fields of personal injury, commercial litigation, land use and labor law. In law school Justice Devens was a member of the law journal at Boalt Hall that was focused on and devoted to labor law.

During his years of practice, Justice Devens earned a reputation as a skilled advocate in both trials and at the appellate level. He demonstrated an astute understanding of the law in pursuing zealous representation of his clients. During his years of practice, in addition to an active trial calendar, Mr. Devens served as lead counsel in several high-profile cases before the Hawai'i Supreme Court and Intermediate Court of Appeals. Throughout his years in practice, Justice Devens consistently demonstrated an ability to approach complex legal issues with skill, fairness, impartiality, and a commitment to justice for all.

Mr. Devens remained also actively involved in the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA), serving as Subcommittee Chair for the Bench and Bar Conference for many years, as well as contributing member of the HSBA board itself. He was also a member of the Disciplinary Board of the Hawai'i Supreme Court, the body that works with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, overseeing compliance with the ethical rules governing Hawai'i's licensed attorneys, protecting the general public from unethical lawyers, and recommending discipline and punishment to the High Court for bar members found violating the rules.

During his short tenure on the high court, Justice Devens has exhibited a combination of a strong knowledge of the law, straightforward analytical skills, respect of for the rule of law, and an immense attention to detail. Justice Devens has distinguished himself on the Hawai'i Supreme Court with a record of thoughtful, well-reasoned opinions and a deep commitment to fairness, judicial integrity, and the rule of law. His work reflects a balance of legal rigor and practical understanding, ensuring decisions grounded in precedent and responsive to the real-world impacts on Hawai'i's communities. Throughout his tenure, Justice Devens has demonstrated strong leadership, collegiality on the bench, and an unwavering dedication to upholding the principles of justice and fostering public trust in the judiciary.

In addition to sitting on the Court, Justice Devens has actively supported developing Hawai'i's next generation of lawyers by serving as faculty at the University of Hawai'i's Trial Academy, as a volunteer attorney for Courts in the Community, and as a judge in mock trial events.

I would also mention that Justice Devens during his working life has contributed to the community welfare. He has shown a commitment to youth outside of the classroom, coaching boxing, baseball, soccer, and softball. He also served on the Hawai'i Land Use Commission.

Finally, but importantly, he has remained throughout his legal career a devoted husband and father to his daughters.

In short, Justice Devens has been a great citizen in our community and a credit to the legal profession.

Justice Devens's commitment to public service, integrity, commitment to the rule of law, and significant legal experience will make him an exceptional Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court. It's unfortunate that our constitution places an artificial age limit on his time to serve, but I am confident that he will be an outstanding Chief Justice during his years as head of the Hawai'i Judiciary.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to approve GM 801 and recommend that the entire State Senate confirm the nomination of Justice Vladimir Devens as the Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Dear Senator Rhoads:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Vladimir Devens for the position of Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court. I have known Mr. Devens for more than 25 years and have practiced both with and against him in many cases. Through the years, Mr. Devens has established himself as a tough, but fair advocate for his clients and has always conducted himself in a professional manner with other practitioners. Mr. Devens has also consistently demonstrated a very high level of academic ability and a keen understanding of the law when applying and arguing legal theories to the facts that have presented themselves in his cases.

Although there is no question that, professionally, Mr. Devens is qualified to serve as Chief Justice, I believe that his most redeeming quality rests with his humility and fairness when dealing with those around him. Whether it be in the legal arena, or as a volunteer for school activities, Mr. Devens is someone who can be counted on to roll up his sleeves to help others.

I believe that Mr. Devens also possesses the appropriate temperament which will be an asset to the Judiciary, as well as to the legal practitioners of this State. There is no doubt in my mind that, if nominated and confirmed, Mr. Devens will tirelessly work towards managing all aspects of the Judiciary and providing all litigants with a fair opportunity to be heard.

Given all of these positive traits, I ask that the Senate of the State of Hawaii favorably consider Vladimir Devens' nomination for Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

CARY T. TANAKA, ESQ.

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/17/2026 3:20:29 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lon Paresa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Rhoads and JDC Senators,

Please accept my wholehearted support for Associate Justice Vlad Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court. I have know Justice Devens our entire lives. Mahalo.

Lon Paresa

Retired House Assistant Sergeant at Arms/ Retired Army Colonel

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/17/2026 3:46:35 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Max Weisbarth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support Governor Green's nomination of Vlad Devens to serve as the next Chief Justice for the Hawaii State Supreme Court.



TED H.S. HONG
ATTORNEY AT LAW, L.L.L.C.

EMPLOYMENT,
WORKPLACE LAW & LITIGATION

April 17, 2026

Hon. Karl Rhoads
Chairman
Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, Rm. 228
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE: GM 801 : Vladimir P. Devens, Esq.
Nominee to Chief Justice, Hawaii State Supreme Court.
Testimony in Support of Confirmation.**

Dear Senator Rhoads and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to add my support to the nomination of the Hon. Vladimir P. Devens for Chief Justice of the State of Hawaii. My perspective is that of a plaintiff's lawyer, with an emphasis in employment law. Justice Devens comes from a small law-firm, who has done a lot of work concerning employment law. Until his appointment as Associate Justice, this was an area that had been sorely lacking on the Court. Justice Devens understands and has seen the impact and plight of individual employees and former employees in an increasingly difficult judicial environment.

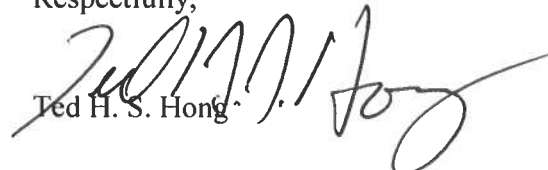
I first met Justice Devens, while he served with the Honolulu Police Department as a rank and file police officer. He was very well respected by fellow officers and supervising officers. He rose through the ranks quickly. As one of the City's attorney's, I constantly heard that many in the City administration thought he was destined to be Chief because of his superior work ethic and intelligence. He later decided to leave the police department and practice law.

Based on his father's and sister's standing in the legal community, going into corporate law or insurance defense, would have been easy. But again, he chose the harder path and represented individuals instead of corporate and insurance company interests. He has even represented public sector Unions.

While on the bench, his decisions showcase his superior legal, analytical and writing skills. His decisions are clear, concisely written and direct. Coupled with his exemplary work ethic, the Judiciary as an organization, will benefit from his tireless efforts to help improve the organization through his collaborative and respectful demeanor.

We, as a State, have been truly blessed by the leadership of Chief Justice Recktenwald and I am sure the same will be true under the promising leadership of Chief Justice Devens.

Respectfully,


Ted H. S. Hong

P.O. Box 4217, HILO, HI 96720

TELEPHONE: (808) 933-1919

FAX: (808) 935-8281

WEB: TEDHONGLAW.COM



April 17, 2026

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Judiciary
Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session of 2026

RE: GM 801 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS, for a term to expire in 10 years

Hearing Date: April 22, 2026, 10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and members of the committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of GM801 confirming Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court. I have had the privilege of knowing Justice Devens both professionally and personally, and I am confident in his abilities and dedication to upholding the principles in the final interpretations of our state statutes and constitution.

Justice Devens brings a wealth of legal experience and knowledge both in private practice and currently serving as an Associate Justice. Having practiced as an attorney for nearly four decades, he has demonstrated a profound understanding of the law and a commitment to fairness and impartiality. Justice Devens extensive background in all aspects of commercial litigation, constitutional law, appellate practice, including serving as lead counsel in several high-profile cases before the Hawaii Supreme Court. This experience positions him as an utmost qualified candidate for the Hawaii Supreme Court.

In addition to Justice Devens' impressive background, he possesses qualities that are essential for a Supreme Court Justice. Justice Devens is known for his thorough knowledge of the law, meticulous attention to detail, superior analytical skills, and a deep respect for the rule of law. He has consistently demonstrated the ability to approach complex legal issues with fairness, impartiality, and a commitment to justice, and has distinguished himself amongst his judicial colleagues for such abilities.

Justice Devens also has a strong record of community involvement and a dedication to public service, especially as it relates to training Hawaii's next generation of lawyers. He has served as faculty of UH's Trial Academy, as a volunteer attorney for Courts in the Community, and as a judge in many mock trial settings. He has also shared his love for

sports with Hawaii's youth by serving as a boxing, baseball, soccer and softball coach, demonstrating a commitment for the well-being of the youth in our community.

I am confident that Justice Devens would serve the people of Hawai'i as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court with distinction, bringing a wealth of experience, a commitment to the rule of law, and a deep understanding of the legal system. For these reasons, I strongly support and urge you to approve GM801 and confirm Justice Devens' nomination as the Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court. Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Michael L. Iosua, Partner
Imanaka Asato, LLLC

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/20/2026 8:56:12 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wintehn Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I testify in STRONG and UNAMBIGUOUS SUPPORT of the nomination of Vladimir Devens to the position of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Hawaii. I have know Justice Devens both personally and professionally and can attest that he is qualified for this nomination. Professionally Justice Devens was a practicing attorney with a reputation for being smart and talented. He had a reputataion for always being prepared and a man of his word. Personally, he is a devoted family man and a loyal friend. I believe that his character and ability will serve the State of Hawaii well and will guide the Judiciary into this next Chapter.

Should you have any questions regarding Justice Devens or my testimony, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Testimony in opposition to GM801 appointing Valdimir Devens as Chief Justice of the
Hawai'i Supreme Court

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in opposition to the appointment of Valdimir Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court.

An article in the April 20, 2026 Civil Beat points out that Mr. Devens has twice failed to disclose his four-year-long affiliation as a board member with the Carpenters Union's dark money SuperPAC Be Change Now.

This is an entity that has devoted millions of dollars to influence elections. Public records show that in some cases, Be Change Now has spent more to support single candidates than the candidates themselves were able to raise.

SB2471, SD 2, HD 1, which aims to prevent this kind of oversized influence is poised for approval by the Hawai'i State Legislature. If approved, it will likely be subjected to appeal, perhaps landing at the Hawai'i State Supreme Court. That body should not be overseen by a man who has actively participated in the kind of activity this bill is meant to eliminate. In fact, I would question Mr. Devens' ability to fairly adjudicate any campaign finance reform law.

Please reject this nomination.

Ann Botticelli



866 Kawaiaha'o St.
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 593-2994
sumidasautorepair@gmail.com

April 22, 2026

The Thirty-Third Legislature
The Senate
Committee on Judiciary

SUBJECT: Testimony in Strong Support of GM801 – Confirming Vlad Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawaii State Supreme Court

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee:

My name is Kevin Sumida, owner of Sumida's Auto Repair, and I submit this testimony in strong support of GM801, confirming Vlad Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawaii State Supreme Court.

I have known Vlad for about ten years as a regular customer of my shop. He has always been respectful, easy to talk to, and straightforward. He treats people well and carries himself with humility.

I am not a lawyer, but as a member of the public, it matters to have someone in this role who is fair and treats people with respect. As someone who has had the opportunity to observe his character over time, Vlad is that kind of person.

I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm his nomination.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Kevin Sumida
Sumida's Auto Repair

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE NOMINATION OF
JUSTICE VLADIMIR DEVENS
TO SERVE AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE HAWAI‘I SUPREME COURT**

Submitted to: Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Submitted by: Kenneth L. Lawson, in his individual capacity

Date: April 20, 2026

Position: Support

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kenneth Lawson. I submit this testimony strictly in my individual capacity. I am not writing on behalf of the Hawai‘i Innocence Project, or any other organization with which I am affiliated. My views here are my own.

I write in **support** of the nomination of Associate Justice Vladimir Devens to serve as Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i Supreme Court.

I want to be candid with the Committee about how I arrived at this position, because I think the path matters more than the conclusion.

When Justice Devens was first nominated to the Supreme Court in 2023, I had real reservations. His career before the bench was built largely on representing law enforcement unions and public employee organizations—including SHOPO, the police officers’ union. For someone who has spent much of his professional life litigating on behalf of the wrongfully convicted and fighting to hold state actors accountable, that background raised a legitimate concern: Would a justice whose practice had been so closely tied to law enforcement bring genuine fairness to the criminal justice matters that come before our highest court?

I was willing to be persuaded by his record. I have been.

In the time Justice Devens has served as an Associate Justice, I have paid close attention to his opinions and his participation in oral argument in cases touching criminal procedure, constitutional rights, and the integrity of convictions. What I have seen is a jurist who approaches these cases the way a good judge should: without ideological preconception, with careful attention to the record, and with a visible willingness to follow the law where it leads—including to outcomes that cannot have been comfortable for someone with his professional history. His reasoning has been rigorous. His questioning at argument has been even-handed. And his written opinions reflect a justice who understands that the stakes in a criminal case—for the accused, for victims, for the public—are too high for shortcuts.

That is what we should want from every member of our Supreme Court, and it is especially what we should want from a Chief Justice. The Chief leads not only through administrative authority

but through example. The tone the Chief sets—on fairness, on deliberation, on the seriousness with which our courts treat the rights of every person who comes before them—reverberates through every circuit, district, and specialized court in the state.

I would not have written this testimony five years ago. I am writing it now because Justice Devens has earned it—through the work, on the record, in the cases that matter most. I respectfully urge the Committee to recommend confirmation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for the Committee’s careful consideration of this nomination.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. Lawson

Kenneth L. Lawson

Submitted in individual capacity only

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/20/2026 2:53:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brett Kulbis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads and Committee Members,

My name is Brett Kulbis, I'm a 26yr retired Navy Veteran, who took a solemn oath to defend the Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic, and that oath didn't expire when I retired. I live in Ewa Beach. Who believes that an independent judiciary, one answerable to the U.S. and Hawai'i Constitutions and the law, not to the politicians who appointed it, is the foundation of ordered liberty. I urge this Committee to vote NO on the confirmation of Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court for the following reasons:

I. JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE IS NOT AN ABSTRACTION — AND IT HAS BEEN COMPROMISED HERE

The principle of judicial independence is simple and foundational: a judge must be free from political debts that reasonably appear to produce bias. In this case, Justice Devens is not free of those debts.

Before his appointment to the Hawai'i Supreme Court, Justice Devens served for approximately four years as a director of Be Change Now, a super PAC linked to the Hawai'i Regional Council of Carpenters and Pacific Resource Partnership. Between June and October 2022, Be Change Now spent just over \$500,000 on advertisements supporting Josh Green's campaign for governor. Governor Green then nominated him to the Hawai'i Supreme Court in 2023. He was confirmed in December 2023 and took his seat in January 2024. Now, in April 2026, the Governor is seeking to elevate him to the highest judicial office in the state.

These are not coincidences but a straight line: Justice Devens helped elect Governor Green through his leadership role at Be Change Now; Governor Green later appointed him to the Supreme Court; now the Governor seeks to elevate him to Chief Justice. Whatever Justice Devens' personal integrity, the structural conflict here is not curable by good intentions. The appearance of impropriety—the reasonable perception that a judge's independence is compromised—is a long-recognized standard in American judicial ethics and has been central to disciplining and disqualifying judges across the country for decades.

Under Article VI of the Hawai'i Constitution, the judicial power of the State is vested in one supreme court, an intermediate appellate court, and lower courts as established by law. The very purpose of this separate vesting of judicial power is to preserve the independence of the judiciary

as a co-equal branch in our system of separated powers, not as an arm of the executive. A Chief Justice whose entire judicial career derives from a single governor's political machine cannot credibly be seen as independent. To the public, he looks less like a neutral magistrate and more like an obligation of that governor.

It has long been understood that judicial independence is not merely an ethical preference; it is a constitutional necessity in a system that limits government by dividing power between separate branches. A Chief Justice who owes his elevation to a political indebtedness to the very executive he is supposed to check is inconsistent with that design.

II. A PATTERN OF NON-DISCLOSURE DISQUALIFIES HIM FROM THE ROLE OF GUARDIAN OF JUDICIAL ETHICS

The Chief Justice sets the ethical tone for the entire Hawai'i judiciary. That is not a ceremonial function; it is an institutional responsibility. As the head of the judicial branch, the Chief Justice is ultimately responsible for the administration of the courts and for safeguarding public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of judges. Justice Devens has already demonstrated that, when faced with a conflict between full transparency and self-interest, he chooses evasion.

When he applied to the Judicial Selection Commission in November 2022 for an associate justiceship, he did not disclose his Be Change Now directorship, despite an application question that specifically asked whether he served as “an officer, director, manager, advisor, or employer of any business.” He disclosed dozens of other affiliations, down to boxing coaching and a 1989–1995 police officer stint. The Be Change Now directorship, his most politically consequential recent role, was nowhere to be found.

According to public reporting, his application and résumé did not mention this four-year directorship at Be Change Now even though they listed numerous less consequential roles. The same pattern repeated itself in 2026. When he applied for the Chief Justiceship, he again did not proactively disclose his Be Change Now service. The connection surfaced only after it was reported in the press, at which point it was acknowledged obliquely in response to a background question.

The defense offered—that “no question required disclosure of prior political activity”—is precisely the kind of lawyerly hair-splitting that erodes public trust in institutions that depend entirely on that trust. A judge worthy of the Chief Justiceship should err on the side of full disclosure, not on finding loopholes in the wording of ethics forms. A judge who answers only what is literally asked, rather than disclosing what any reasonable person would understand to be material, does not yet have the character required of a Chief Justice.

For nearly a century, the American Bar Association's judicial ethics standards have emphasized that judges must avoid both impropriety and the appearance of impropriety, as perceived by a reasonable person with knowledge of the circumstances. Nearly every state—including Hawai'i—incorporates some version of this appearance-of-impropriety standard in judicial conduct rules because the judiciary has no army or purse; its authority rests on public confidence alone. The Chief Justice will be asked to hold lawyers and lower court judges to the highest

standards of candor and disclosure. He cannot do so credibly having failed to meet those standards himself, twice.

III. JUSTICE DEVENS WOULD BRING THE SHALLOWEST JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE OF ANY RECENT CHIEF JUSTICE OR NOMINEE

Justice Devens is an accomplished civil litigator with over three decades at the bar. But the Chief Justiceship is a specific job, a management role of enormous institutional scope. It encompasses oversight of all courts statewide, judicial assignments, court administration, and budgetary stewardship for the entire Hawai‘i judiciary. It demands seasoned institutional knowledge, not merely legal talent.

He would assume this role with approximately two and a half years on the Hawai‘i Supreme Court, less time on the high court than any recent predecessor. By contrast, Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald brought years of appellate leadership experience, serving as Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals beginning in 2007, becoming an Associate Justice in 2009, and being elevated to Chief Justice in 2010. Acting Chief Justice Sabrina McKenna, who has been apparently passed over for this nomination despite being the longest-serving active jurist in the judiciary, has served on the Supreme Court for more than a decade and previously served in the District, Circuit, and Family Courts, giving her unmatched institutional experience.

Article VI, Section 3 of the Hawai‘i Constitution provides that the Governor, with the consent of the Senate, shall fill vacancies on the Supreme Court from a list of nominees presented by the Judicial Selection Commission. The Commission has already provided a list of highly qualified candidates for this vacancy. That Governor Green passed over Acting Chief Justice McKenna—who has earned the role through years of distinguished service—in favor of a two-and-a-half-year associate justice who is also his former super PAC ally is itself revealing.

Meritocracy produces Chief Justices like McKenna, who rose through long service on the bench. Political patronage produces nominees whose elevation follows union-backed super PAC support and a single governor’s favor. A limited-government, separation-of-powers system depends on the former, not the latter.

IV. THIS NOMINATION IS A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF ONE-PARTY JUDICIAL CAPTURE IN HAWAI‘I

Voters in Hawai‘i have watched with growing alarm as the judiciary, meant to be the co-equal, independent third branch of government, has drifted steadily toward functioning as an extension of one-party Democratic governance. The Hawai‘i Constitution does not spell out “separation of powers” in a single clause, but it implements that doctrine by vesting legislative power in the Legislature, executive power in the Governor, and judicial power in the courts as distinct branches. The Justice Devens nomination is a striking example of how that separation is being eroded in practice.

The arc is clean: union-backed super PAC support for Governor Green’s election; Governor Green’s appointment of him to the supreme court; and now his attempt to elevate him over other

nominees, including the sitting Acting Chief Justice, from a Judicial Selection Commission list that includes far more experienced candidates. At each step, the institutional independence of the judiciary is diminished, and the accountability of the executive branch to the people is reduced.

This concern is not partisan. Every Hawai'i voter, Democrat, Republican, or independent, deserves a Chief Justice whose loyalty is to the U.S. and Hawai'i Constitutions, the law, and the people of this state—not to the political network that built his career. A judiciary that is effectively captured by one party's political machinery cannot fulfill its constitutional duty to serve as a check on both legislative and executive overreach.

CLOSING

Article VI, Section 3 of the Hawai'i Constitution deliberately gives the Senate a crucial role in judicial appointments: the Governor may appoint only from a Judicial Selection Commission list, and those appointments require the Senate's consent after a public hearing and vote. The Senate's confirmation power is not a rubber stamp; it is a constitutional check on executive overreach in judicial appointments. It exists precisely for moments like this, when the independence of an entire branch of government is at stake.

This Committee has an opportunity, and in my view an obligation, to exercise that check. I urge the Committee to reject this nomination and to call upon the Judicial Selection Commission to present, and the Governor to select, candidates who bring deeper judicial experience and who bear no structural conflict of interest with the appointing governor, regardless of party affiliation.

The rule of law in Hawai'i depends on a judiciary the public can trust. That trust is not automatic. It must be earned—and it can be destroyed. This nomination, if confirmed, will do lasting damage to both.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote NO on the confirmation of Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

Mahalo,

Brett Kulbis
U.S. Navy Retired

Sources:

1. Honolulu Civil Beat, "New Hawaii Justice Recently Held A Top Position In The Super PAC That Helped Put Gov. Green In Office," Nov. 22, 2023 (<https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/11/new-hawaii-justice-recently-held-a-top-position-in-the-super-pac-that-helped-put-gov-green-in-office/>);
2. Honolulu Civil Beat, "Governor Nominates Former Labor Lawyer To Be Hawai'i's Next Chief Justice," Apr. 2, 2026 (<https://www.civilbeat.org/2026/04/governor-nominates-former-labor-lawyer-hawaiis-next-chief-justice/>);

3. Hawaii Free Press, "April 20, 2026 News Read," Apr. 20, 2026 (<https://www.hawaiifreepress.com/Articles-Daily-News/ID/49043/April-20-2026-News-Read>);
4. Hawai'i Judiciary, "Supreme Court Leadership Transition," Oct. 2025 (https://www.courts.state.hi.us/news_and_reports/2025/09/hawai%CA%BBi-supreme-court-leadership-transition);
5. Mark Recktenwald biography, Keep Our Republic (<https://keepourrepublic.org/staff/mark-e-recktenwald/>).
6. Hawai'i Constitution, Article VI (<https://accesstojustice.nmcourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2023/11/Hawaii-Constitution-Article-VI.pdf>);
7. Judicial Selection Commission rules (https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/jscr_ada.htm);
8. Scholarship on judicial independence and appearance of impropriety (<https://commons.stmarytx.edu/facarticles/639/>).

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/20/2026 5:41:26 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Coralie Matayoshi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong and heartfelt support for the confirmation of Vladimir P. Devens as Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

I have known Vlad for over 30 years not only professionally, but personally, as our families are related by marriage. He is a highly intellectual and skilled lawyer and judge, dedicated community leader, and devoted family man who has my utmost respect and admiration.

Vlad's litigation experience is rich and varied - something that has served him well as an Associate Supreme Court Justice. He represented both plaintiffs and defendants, unions and corporations, public workers, and parties to real estate development projects and business transactions in cases involving construction, land use, permitting, public trust doctrine, constitutional issues, sunshine laws, privacy rights, uniform information practices, corporate governance, fiduciary duties, asbestos defense, wrongful death, products liability, sexual abuse, child abuse, defamation, class actions, and labor disputes.

He successfully litigated a variety of cases at all levels of Hawaii's State courts (Hawaii Supreme Court, Intermediate Court of Appeals, Circuit Court, District Court, Family Court), Federal courts (District of Hawaii, 9th Circuit Court of Appeals), and administrative agencies (e.g., Board of Land and Natural Resources, Zoning Board of Appeals, Building Board of Appeals, Hawaii Labor Relations Board, Disability Compensation Division, Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board).

In addition, before serving on the bench, Vlad had 33 years of experience with criminal law and criminal procedure, including effecting multiple felony arrests, working undercover, drafting and executing search warrants, consulting with prosecutors on cases, consulting with judges on warrants, drafting a search and seizure operations manual for the Honolulu Police Department, providing instruction on the laws of arrest and use of force to new officers, and consulting on criminal defense cases.

The adversarial process can be challenging and sometimes emotionally charged, but through it all, Vlad remained calm, thoughtful, open-minded, and fair in his roles as both an advocate and judge. Through his words and actions, Vlad demonstrates high integrity and strong moral courage to do the right thing, no matter what.

As a former Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) Executive Director, I can tell you that Vlad's work to improve the administration of justice and promote access to the courts and civic education has been exemplary. From serving on the HSBA Board and Bench/Bar Conference committees, to his volunteer work at the Access to Justice Center, as a mock trial judge, and Courts in the Community mentor for Kaimuki, Moanalua, and Waianae High School students, Vlad's many years of dedication is making a difference. His work in the legal community and public at large will serve him well as Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

Finally, I have personally witnessed Vlad in family settings and the loving relationships he has with his wife Joy and their children. Even with his demanding schedule of professional and community commitments, he always made time to coach his daughters' soccer and softball teams.

Given his high intellectual capabilities, decades of litigation experience, service as an Associate Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court, passion for ensuring that justice is served, and leadership in the community, I believe that Vladmir P. Devens is well qualified and well suited to serve as Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a letter in support of his nomination to this very important position.

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/20/2026 9:09:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Berger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

I strongly support Justice Devens for this position. I am confident he will make an excellent Chief Justice. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Thomas Berger

TO: Members of the Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Natalie Iwasa
808-395-3233

HEARING: 9:40 a.m. Wednesday, April 22, 2026

SUBJECT: GM 801, Judicial Confirmation Vladimir Devens - **COMMENTS**

Aloha Chair Rhoads and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing the opportunity to provide testimony on the confirmation of the appointment of Vladimir Devens as chief justice.

As you know, concerns were raised about Justice Devens and his lack of up-front disclosure regarding his prior relationship to Be Change Now. One would think that someone who regularly operates in an environment that requires “beyond a reasonable doubt” in the determination of guilt would be very conscientious about perceptions and would make an effort to directly disclose matters such as this.

The fact that this wasn't disclosed in the same manner that other old memberships were raises questions about character and ability to use good judgement.

DEREK R. KOBAYASHI

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April 21, 2026

Honorable Karl Roads, Chair
Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 228
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: Gov. Msg. No. 801 – Nomination of Associate Justice VLADIMIR P. DEVENS
to Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court – **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Judiciary Committee Members:

I write to express my **strong support** of Governor Green's nomination of Associate Justice Vladimir P. Devens, Esq. to the position of Associate Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court. I have known "Vlad" for over 15 years and first came to work closely with him as Directors on the Hawai'i State Bar Association ("HSBA") Board of Directors. Throughout the years, we have maintained a professional relationship and I am very familiar with Vlad's background, practice, legal experience and qualifications to serve as Chief Justice.

Vlad is of the highest integrity, moral courage and is decisive. I know this from matters that came before the HSBA, particularly one involving a *Keller* issue and whether or not the HSBA could take a position in response to a request to support funding for legal service providers. Vlad spoke out and framed the issue in relation to the HSBA's stated mission and courageously asked the fellow directors to favorably consider the request. While fairly addressing the concerns of others, Vlad argued for a position of support, rather than have the HSBA adopt a cautious approach to avoid any potential *Keller* issue by stating no position, at all.

I know that before serving as an Associate Justice, Vlad has been in legal practice in Hawai'i for over 35 years. He has very strong legal ability and broad legal experience; having focused on litigation where he has represented plaintiffs, defendants, corporations, businesses, and public workers and unions in labor disputes, contract negotiations, and arbitrations. Has also represented parties in real estate development projects, business transactions, and other litigation matters. Vlad has appeared before various administrative agencies, including the Zoning Board of Appeals, Hawai'i Labor Relations Board, Building Board of Appeals, Board of Land and Natural Resources, and the Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board.

He has taken litigation cases from the start, through trial, and subsequent appeals filed with the appellate courts. Vlad has prepared his own appellate briefs in his cases and presented oral arguments before the Hawai'i Supreme Court and the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

Vlad is highly intelligent and graduated from UC Berkeley with high honors (Magna Cum Laude) and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and UC Berkeley's Economics Honor Society. He graduated from UC Berkeley's School of Law (fka Boalt Hall). He has wisdom beyond his years.

I have always known Vlad to be compassionate and fair. He has often served as a sounding board for me in cases, particularly in my plaintiff's personal injury cases, as I have sought his insights on how to pursue and resolve, fairly and compassionately, cases for injured clients.

Vlad is certainly diligent. I have personally experienced his diligence through his many years of volunteer service, in various professional organizations and especially through his service as Co-Chair of the Committee on Judicial Administration and his organization and presentation of the Bench-Bar conferences. Recently, Vlad Co-Chaired the Judiciary's Committee on Artificial Intelligence ("AI") and the Courts with Circuit Court Judge John Tonaki and he was integral to the Committee's work which culminated in a final report in December 2025, detailing the emerging and repaid evolution of AI. He serves as a fellow Commissioner on the Hawai'i Access to Justice Commissioner.

Vlad has always been pleasant, courteous, and professional to work with and I have no doubt that if appointed, he would serve the Hawai'i Supreme Court with an excellent judicial temperament.

In summary, Vladimir P. Devens, Esq. will fulfill all of the responsibilities and duties of the position to which he has been nominated - Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court – and I strongly support his nomination by Governor Green. Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Very truly yours,



Derek R. Kobayashi

HAYLEY Y.C. CHENG
First Deputy Public Defender

Office of the Public Defender
1130 N. Nimitz Hwy, Suite A-254
Honolulu, HI 96817
(808) 586-2208

April 21, 2026

GM 801: Support for consideration and confirmation as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS

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

My name is Hayley Y.C. Cheng, and I submit this testimony in my personal capacity in strong support of the nomination of Vladimir P. Devens to serve as Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court.

I currently serve as the First Deputy Public Defender for the State of Hawai'i, and through that role, I have spent my career working within our courts and observing, firsthand, the qualities that distinguish a truly effective, fair, and respected judge. The role of Chief Justice, as the leader of the Judiciary and steward of our justice system, is especially vital. It requires wisdom, integrity, and the ability to inspire confidence in both the bench and the broader community. Associate Justice Devens would excel in that position.

I first met Justice Devens in 2016 when I joined the Hawaii State Bar Association Judicial Administration Committee. I continue to serve on this committee today and Justice Devens is now the committee co-chair along with Justice Simeon Acoba (ret.).

Our committee meets monthly and organizes annual events such as the Civil, Criminal, and Family Law Forums, as well as Bench-Bar Conferences. As our co-chair, I continue to be impressed by the way Justice Devens leads with thoughtfulness, collaboration, and a genuine team-oriented spirit. Despite the significant increase in his professional responsibilities since his appointment to the Supreme Court, his commitment to the committee has never wavered. He will bring that same dedication, leadership, and collaborative spirit to his service as Chief Justice and leader of the Judiciary.

I respectfully urge this Committee to confirm his nomination.

Respectfully submitted,



Hayley Y.C. Cheng

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/21/2026 8:35:16 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rodney A. Maile	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Hawaii Supreme Court Associate Justice VLADIMIR P. DEVENS

I wholeheartedly support the nomination of Hawaii Supreme Court Associate Justice VLADIMIR P. DEVENS to be the next Chief Justice of the Hawaii State Supreme Court.

I have known Justice Devens since 2008 and have worked with him in his capacity as a commissioner of the Land Use Commission, and as an Associate Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

He very bright, diligent, and meticulous in his work, and he is very dedicated to public service.

I have the highest regard for his character, integrity, and judicial temperament, and I firmly believe that he will be a truly remarkable Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Justice Devens.

Rodney A. Maile

Stephen Teves, J.D.
1099 Alakea, Street, Suite 2530
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

LATE

Re: GM 801/Confirmation of Vladimir P. Devens for Chief Justice
of the Hawai'i Supreme Court

Good morning, Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate
Judiciary Committee,

My name is Stephen Teves and I'm testifying today in strong SUPPORT to the
nomination of Justice Devens as the next Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

As a licensed attorney for over 35 years, I have been present for several fine Chief
Justices, and I'm confident that Justice Devens will be an outstanding Chief Justice,
upholding the exemplary tradition of the previous Chief Justices.

Over the years, Vlad and I crossed paths in the legal community, and I always found
Vlad to be honest, fair and a highly regarded litigator. Most of all, I appreciated that Vlad
was an excellent communicator, whether speaking to opposing counsel, the presiding
judge, or a layperson. This is a gift that not many attorneys possess, but Vlad has this
communication gift.

Because of Vlad's extensive work background and his tenure as an Associate Justice, I
strongly believe Justice Devens will be an excellent Chief Justice of the Hawai'i
Supreme Court, making the Hawai'i Bar and, more importantly, the people of Hawai'i
proud.

Mahalo for your consideration and I humbly ask for your support for the nomination of
Vladimir P. Devens as the next Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

Sincerely,

Stephen Teves

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/21/2026 1:24:11 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debra Kagawa-Yogi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

GM 801: Support for consideration and confirmation of Chief Justice of the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, Gubernatorial Appointee, VLADIMIR P. DEVENS.

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

I have been a practicing attorney in Hawai'i since 1994 and have had the opportunity to work with Justice Devens for over 20 years. In my work representing the working class, I have had the opportunity to discuss and collaborate with Mr. Devens on numerous issues, cases and legislative matters.

Across all of my professional interactions with Justice Devens, I have found him to be exceptionally knowledgeable, well-prepared, articulate, and professional. Justice Devens consistently demonstrated strong leadership and administrative skills, sound judgment, and an even temperament. He is firm but fair, and approaches his work with integrity, humility, and a genuine sense of responsibility to the people of Hawai'i. Justice Devens is deeply committed to fairness and justice, particularly with respect to working people and our broader communities.

Justice Devens is a conscientious and hardworking jurist who brings intelligence, creativity, and steady leadership to his role. In my experience, his character and integrity are exemplary.

If confirmed as Chief Justice, Justice Devens will bring a wealth of experience, balanced judgment, and a deep respect for the role of the judiciary in our constitutional system. I am confident he will strengthen relationships between the courts, the bar, and the public, and serve the State of Hawai'i with distinction.

For these reasons, I strongly support his confirmation and respectfully urge the Committee to recommend him favorably to the full Senate.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of Justice Devens.

LATE

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/21/2026 11:03:14 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Levi K. Hookano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I write in full support of Associate Justice Devens to serve as the next Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court. I served on the board of the Hawaii State Bar Association for many years alongside Mr. Devens and observed his deliberative process into a wide range of legal and administrative issues. He was always thoughtful with his words and advanced the discussion and decision making.

As an attorney, Justice Devens has an excellent reputation among his peers. When he was in private practice he advocated zealously for his clients and for the rule of law. He is also community minded and works to lift those around him.

I have no doubt that Justice Devens will serve with honor and integrity as Hawaii's next Chief Justice. His legal accumen and adminisitrative skills will serve this state well.

Mahalo,

Levi

LATE

GM-801

Submitted on: 4/21/2026 11:57:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/22/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tenari Maafala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To The Honorable Chair Rhoads; Vice Chair Gabbard; and esteemed Members of The Senate Committee of Judiciary:

My name is Tenari Ma'afala, I am submitting my written testimony in STRONG SUPPORT on behalf of Mr. Vladimir P. Devens' nomination as Chief Justice to the Hawaii State Supreme Court.

I have known Mr. Devens both personally and professionally speaking, for approximately thirty (35) years consecutively. Our relationship began very early on in our careers as rookie Police Officers with the Honolulu Police Department. After serving as a Full Time Police Officer for approximately 5-6 years, he resigned to pursue his Private Practice In Law. Admirably, upon resigning as a full time Police Officer, he immediately enlisted as a Reserve Police Officer (a volunteer position) which I believe he held until assuming his duties as an Honorable Associate Justice with the Hawaii Supreme Court.

Our professional relationship had extended into the Labor Relations arena. During my tenure as the elected President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers (SHOPO), Mr. Devens was hired by SHOPO as our General Counsel.

Whether it was with the HPD and or SHOPO, Mr. Devens without demanding it (although he could have rightfully so), he was able to command and achieve it through his own actions with utmost Professionalism deeply rooted in Self-Sacrifice for the Greater Good and through character traits, i.e., Integrity, Respect, Fairness, Compassion, and unrelenting Passion in pursuit of Righteousness For All!

I humbly ask, hope, and pray for your favorable nomination for Mr. Devens in becoming the next Chief Justice to the Hawaii Supreme Court.

Much Alofa, Mahalo, and Respect Always. May GOD Bless You All and Your Precious Ohana Always... Tenari Ma'afala



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

Vladimir P. Devens
Chief Justice of the Hawaii State Supreme Court (GM801)

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: Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 9:40 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 GM801, Nomination of Vladimir P. Devens for the Hawaii State Supreme Court.

After a rigorous process, described below, the HSBA Board of Directors concluded that Justice Devens is **QUALIFIED**. Justice Devens has served as an Associate Supreme Court Justice since 2024. Prior to serving on the Hawaii Supreme Court, he worked in private practice across several areas of law, including labor and employment, personal injury, medical malpractice, defamation, construction and land use, administrative appeals, and appellate work. He additionally served as a Honolulu Police Department (HPD) Officer, where he investigated organized crime and helped to draft the HPD's Search and Seizure Manual. He serves on multiple boards, commissions, and committees, including the Hawaii Access to Justice Commission, the Judiciary Committee on Artificial Intelligence, and Commission on Professionalism and the Lawyers Fund for Client Protection. He previously served on the HSBA Board of Directors and is active on multiple volunteer organizations.

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.

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- 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.
- Justice Devens 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 Justice Devens 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 Justice Devens on April 16, 2026, to discuss the subcommittee's findings.
- On April 17, 2026, the HSBA Board of Directors interviewed Justice Devens in executive session.
- The HSBA Board deliberated and voted that Justice Devens was qualified.

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