

**THE SENATE
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

April 17, 2026
Conference Room 229, 1:00 P.M.

Testimony in **Support** of Governor's Message **GM 804**
For Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii,
MARIE LADERTA

Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Titin Sakata, and I am employed as an Administrative Rules Specialist at the Department of Taxation. I submit this testimony in my private capacity.

I have known Ms. Laderta since June 2003, when I was hired as Special Assistant to the Director of Taxation. In that role, I reported directly to Kurt Kawafuchi, then Director of Taxation, and to Ms. Laderta, then Deputy Director. As my direct supervisor, Ms. Laderta and I interacted daily. Ms. Laderta oversaw tax operations and managed more than 300 employees, giving me a valuable opportunity to observe and learn from her leadership.

Ms. Laderta is exceptionally intelligent and highly solution-oriented. She is deeply committed to public service and brings energy and focus to every project she undertakes. She treats others with respect and genuine care, and she has a remarkable ability to inspire and motivate those around her to perform at their best. She is a compassionate, fair, and effective leader and collaborator.

One of Ms. Laderta's greatest strengths is her ability to bring people together. She listens carefully to differing perspectives, fosters mutual understanding, and guides opposing sides toward consensus. She is impartial in her decision-making and consistently demonstrates the highest level of integrity.

Ms. Laderta's extensive government experience, including serving as the State's Chief Negotiator, Chief Adjudicator of the ADLRO, and on the Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board, makes her an excellent candidate for the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i.

I am confident that, if confirmed, Ms. Laderta will thoughtfully balance the interests of students, faculty, the University of Hawai'i, and the State of Hawai'i. She will contribute meaningfully to advancing the University's mission in service to the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in **support** of Ms. Laderta's appointment to the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,
Titin Sakata

GM-804

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 1:25:00 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James T. Leavitt Jr	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

My name is Jim Leavitt, I am the senior partner of Leavitt, Yamane, & Soldner and I am here to advocate for the confirmation of Marie Laderta to the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai‘i.

I could go on at length about Marie’s character, intelligence, and exceptional work ethic, but I believe that a review of her background and biography speaks powerfully for itself. Marie began her professional career as a paralegal with my law firm and, through talent, discipline, and dedication, has steadily risen to positions of increasing importance and responsibility.

Her progression, including her service with the Attorney General’s office and her advancement into higher leadership roles, clearly demonstrates both her capability and the trust others have consistently placed in her judgment and performance.

Kendrick S. Chang
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(808) 627-2758

April 16, 2026

SENT VIA ONLINE

Senate Committee on Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Hearing: Friday, April 17, 2026, 1:00pm
Conference Room 229

**RE: GM 804 – Confirmation of Marie Laderta to The University of Hawaii
Board of Regents – Strong Support**

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee Members:

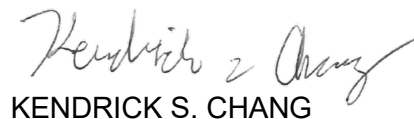
I write in **strong support** of my hanai aunty, Marie Laderta, for her confirmation to serve on the Board of Regents (“BOR”) of the University of Hawaii (“UH”) System.¹

I first met Marie in my early adolescence days and she subsequently became an extended personal hanai aunty and mentor during my college studies to present day as a rising attorney in the legal profession. She has known my family over several generations through the local Chinatown business community. Prior to law school, Marie actively supported her family’s furniture and antique store on Maunakea Street. Marie’s upbringing in a small business family from Hong Kong is the genesis of her even-keeled temperament, compassion, and kindness to everyone she knows in any capacity. I am confident that Marie will be able to collaborate with all stakeholders in the UH System and serve as a steadfast advocate for students.

Marie brings a wealth of experience as an attorney, quasi-judicial adjudicator, and public-sector administrator. She has served in various administrative and appointed roles in the State of Hawaii spanning three decades of service. In these roles, Marie has specialized knowledge on the State budget process, collective bargaining, and the Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund. These experiences will be most beneficial to the UH BOR and current UH System administrators, especially should Marie serve on the UH BOR committees on Institutional Success, Independent Audit, and Governance.

I strongly support Marie’s confirmation and respectfully request that the Senate Committee on Education renders an approve and consent recommendation.

All the best,


KENDRICK S. CHANG

¹ I submit this testimony in my personal capacity. Any views expressed are not representative of my employer or any organization.

GM-804

Submitted on: 4/9/2026 3:54:09 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christen Tang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christen Tang, and I am writing in strong support of Ms. Marie C. Laderta for the University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents.

I had the privilege of working with Ms. Laderta when she served as a Board Member at the Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board. She consistently demonstrated sound judgment, fairness, and the ability to thoughtfully navigate complex legal issues.

Ms. Laderta was also someone I looked to as a mentor. She was always kind, approachable, and willing to take the time to guide and support staff. She set a strong example of professionalism and integrity, and created a work environment that was collaborative and respectful.

Her public service experience, combined with her thoughtful and balanced approach to decision-making, make her very well-suited for the Board of Regents. She will serve with distinction and be a strong asset to the University of Hawai‘i.

I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of her nomination.

Sincerely,

Christen Tang

Testimony in Strong Support of GM804

April 10, 2026

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair of the Committee on Education and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to offer my strong support for the nomination of Marie Laderta to the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents.

I had the privilege of working with Ms. Laderta from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021, while she was serving as a member of the Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board (LIRAB). During this period, I served as LIRAB's Executive Officer and was able to observe firsthand the qualities that make her exceptionally well suited for this important role.

Ms. Laderta approached her responsibilities with seriousness, diligence, and deep respect for the work before her. She took the time to thoroughly learn the subject matter and understand the legal and practical issues involved in workers' compensation appeals. She was always well prepared and thoughtful in her analysis.

What stood out most to me was her diligence and resolve. Ms. Laderta was not afraid to make hard decisions. She was an excellent listener and quick study who made every effort to understand both sides of a dispute before reaching a decision. She never rushed to judgment or approached cases with preconceived views. Instead, she carefully weighed the competing positions, listened with patience and respect, and rendered decisions that were fair, reasonable, and grounded in integrity.

Ms. Laderta has held many leadership positions and has served the people of Hawaii in many demanding and challenging roles, including but not limited to ADLRO Chief, EUTF Trustee and Chair, DHRD Director and DoTAX Deputy Director. She will bring a strong skill set and unparalleled commitment to doing what is fair, what is right, and what is best for the University of Hawaii.

I am confident that Ms. Laderta will serve the University of Hawai'i with distinction and dedication. She will be an outstanding Regent.

Aloha,

Lily Ling,
Attorney and Retired Executive Officer to LIRAB

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 804
(WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY)
Friday, April 17, 2026
1:00 pm
Conference Room 229**

Dear Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani & Senate Education Committee members:

I strongly and respectfully urge this committee to confirm Marie Laderta to the position of Regent to the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii. While I am the current Chair of the State Council on Revenues, I write this recommendation in my personal capacity.

I have known Marie since 1999 or for 27 years, since we first served as respective division supervisors at the State of Hawaii Department of Attorney General under Governor Ben Cayetano and then Attorney General Earl Anzai.

I was also Marie's supervisor at the Hawaii Tax Department from 2003-2005, and worked with Marie professionally through 2010.

I believe Marie, an administrator, attorney and adjudicator, possesses the experience, judgment, integrity, and skill set to perform the duties required of her as a University of Hawaii Regent. More importantly, she has a strong sense of fairness and impartiality in decision making, and is unequivocally a person of high integrity. Her track record of government service demonstrates her dedication to public service, her resilience, and her ability to adapt and add value where needed.

In my 27 years of knowing and working closely with Marie, I have witnessed Marie to manage some of the most challenging staff and situations and turn them around in a positive fashion. Marie is always upbeat, displays a positive attitude and perseveres in accomplishing tasks assigned to her. Marie is very personable and an exceptional people person. She is also extremely smart, a quick study, and adaptable to new situations. While Marie had virtually no tax background,

she developed a quick solid foundation and excelled at the Tax Department. While she is articulate and straight forward, she is also an extremely good listener, open minded, and diplomatic. Marie is also compassionate and has a big heart but will always "do the right thing."

Marie was my Deputy when I was Tax Director, and she was a self-starter and motivator who aptly ran the operations of the State tax office. Her multi-tasking skills made her an important asset to the successful management of the tax department. When we were colleagues and fellow supervisors at the Attorney General's office, Marie led the Tort Litigation Division as Supervisor & I supervised the Tax Division. Marie had her own caseload of litigation cases plus, as Supervisor, was responsible for ensuring the effective running of the AG's tort litigation cases. She wrote her first Appellate brief after 1 year of being at the AG's office in a death case and prevailed. Marie is a fast learner and she has the uncanny ability to identify and maximize resources to their potential.

When she was the State's Chief Negotiator, she became acquainted with labor issues that challenged the State, and established mutually respected relationships with the public unions.

At the Judiciary, as a working Chief of her program (the Administrative Driver's License Revocation Office), Marie sharpened and honed in her adjudication skills by actively hearing license revocation cases. She believed the hands-on experience as a working Supervisor helped her understand the process and better able to lead her program.

I have known Marie for 27 years and have had the pleasure of working with her at various stages of her State career. While in my career, I have been fortunate to have recruited a number of talented professionals and very good people, Marie is one of the best, if not the best professional and person that I was blessed to have had the opportunity to recruit and work with.

The Board of Regents will be very fortunate to have Marie as part of their team. I believe she will be a tremendous asset. I strongly and unequivocally urge this committee to confirm her. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Kawafuchi

Melanie S. Matsui

April 14, 2026

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: GM804

**SUPPORT FOR CONFIRMATION OF MARIE C.L. LADERTA
TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

Dear Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

Please accept this in SUPPORT of MARIE C.L. **LADERTA**'s appointment to the University of Hawaii Board of Regents.

I have known Ms. Laderta since 2015, when she was appointed to the State of Hawaii, Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board, as a Board Member. She is a career public servant and I am not at all surprised that she remains committed to serve the public after her LIRAB term ends. She is an excellent candidate for this role on the Board of Regents.

Over the years, I witnessed Ms. Laderta in her professional capacity and know, first-hand, that she has the capability to receive information from parties with competing interests and to objectively assess and analyze multi-faceted issues to make the best decisions she can. We have also participated together in mediation-type settlement negotiations and her empathy and impartiality led to discussions and results accepted by all parties.

I have no doubt that she will be an asset to the communities served by the Board of Regents.

Melanie S. Matsui

GM-804

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 6:16:23 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Damien Elefante	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY OF DAMIEN ELEFANTE
IN SUPPORT OF GM804
APPOINTMENT OF MARIE LADERTA
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I BOARD OF REGENTS

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of the appointment of **Marie Laderta** to the **Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i**.

Ms. Laderta is a dedicated career State employee, having served the State of Hawai'i for more than 25 years in various legal, administrative, and leadership positions across multiple departments. Her long record of service demonstrates her professionalism, sound judgment, and deep commitment to public service.

While serving as the Chair of the Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board, I worked closely with Ms. Laderta on numerous cases. I found her to be pleasant, collaborative, and consistently open to discussion and listening. She approaches every matter with fairness, preparation, and respect for differing viewpoints. Her calm demeanor and willingness to engage thoughtfully contributed significantly to the Board's ability to deliberate effectively.

Based on my direct experience working with her, I can state that Ms. Laderta possesses the capacity, ability, and temperament necessary to serve on the Board of Regents. Her broad professional background, balanced approach to decision-making, and commitment to public service make her exceptionally well-qualified to contribute to the governance of the University of Hawai'i system.

For these reasons, I support her appointment.

GM-804

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 11:59:24 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angeline Shiroma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Sirs,

I am pleased to offer my strong support for the appointment of Marie Christine Laderta to the Board of Regents at the University of Hawai'i.

Marie brings over 23 years of distinguished public service, with a career defined by leadership, legal expertise, and a deep commitment to the community. She began as an educator at a public school which grounded her in the value of education.

As a Deputy Attorney General and Supervisor in the Tort Litigation Division, and as Deputy Director of the Department of Taxation, Ms Laderta earned crucial experience in government operations, risk management, and legal compliance, which directly prepares her to handle the University of Hawaii's complex legal, financial, and administrative challenges, and ensuring stewardship of public assets.

Notably, when Ms Laderta was appointed a Director at the State Department of Human Resources Development, she became the State's first female Chief Negotiator - leading complex labor negotiations and working closely with public unions.

Ms Laderta currently serves on the Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board, adjudicating workers' compensation cases with fairness and rigor.

In my humble opinion, Ms Laderta's experience and integrity makes her an exceptionally well-qualified candidate for her role as a member on the University of Hawaii's Board of Regents.

I respectfully urge your support for her appointment to the UH Board of Regents.

Sincerely,

Angeline Shiroma