



March 31, 2026

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: JC 24 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, SIMEONA LYNN LILIUOKALANI AHUNA MARIANO, for a term to expire in 6 years.

Hearing: Tuesday, March 31, 2026, 9:30 a.m.

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

Hawaii Women Lawyers (“**HWL**”) respectfully submits testimony in **support** of the nomination of Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano to **the District Court of the First Circuit (Oahu)** as District Court Judge for a term of 6 years.

HWL is a nonprofit organization with members including approximately 300 attorneys. HWL’s mission includes improving the status of women in the legal profession, increasing the number of women attorneys in positions of authority and responsibility, and promoting the advancement of all women.

Increasing opportunities for qualified women in the Judiciary is extremely important. As highlighted by the World Justice Project, the rule of law depends on having justice delivered by “competent, ethical, and independent representatives and neutrals who reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.” HWL believes that continuing to include qualified women in the Judiciary is vitally important and appreciates the significant strides made in the past several years to improve the diversity of our bench.

Noting that the HSBA has found Ms. Mariano to be qualified for the position of District Court Judge and for the reasons above, HWL supports her appointment.

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

Testimony in Support of Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano

To: The Honorable Members of the Judicial Selection Commission / Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Nomination of Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano to the District Court of the First Circuit

Introduction

It is a profound honor to submit this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano. Having known Sime for 10 years in my capacity as a Child Welfare worker, I have had the opportunity to observe her legal acumen, her unwavering integrity, and her deep-seated commitment to the people of Hawai'i.

Legal Excellence and Temperament

The District Court of the First Circuit requires a judge who can manage a high-volume docket with efficiency without ever sacrificing the dignity of the individuals appearing before the court. Throughout her career, and since I've known her Sime has demonstrated:

- **Exceptional Legal Scholarship:** Her ability to parse complex statutes while maintaining a focus on the practical application of the law is exemplary.
- **Judicial Temperament:** She possesses the rare combination of a "thick skin" and a "warm heart." She listens actively, remains calm under pressure, and treats every party as a human being.

Commitment to Community and Culture

As her name suggests, Sime carries a deep connection to the heritage and values of these islands. Her practice has always been informed by the principles of *pono* and *fairness*. She understands that the law does not exist in a vacuum, but serves a diverse community with unique socio-economic challenges.

"Sime does not just understand the law; she understands the people the law is meant to protect. She understands human beings. Her presence on the bench will ensure that justice is administered with both wisdom and empathy."

Conclusion

Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano is a practitioner of the highest caliber. Her transition from the bar to the bench is not merely a career milestone, but a significant win for the First Circuit. I urge the Committee to confirm her nomination without reservation.

Respectfully Submitted,

K Stacia Ohira Over

Lead Child Welfare Services Trainer

March 25, 2026

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/25/2026 10:43:34 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marites Galangam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Formal Testimony in Support of Simeona Mariano

Date: March 25, 2026

To: The Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: JC24– Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Simeona Mariano.

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the confirmation of Simeona Mariano to the District Court of the First Circuit. Having known Ms. Mariano for over 25 years, beginning with our time as classmates at Seattle University, I can attest to her exceptional character, intellectual rigor, and unwavering dedication to the community.

In my professional capacity as a TA-Vice Principal, I am daily tasked with resolving disputes and upholding regulations while maintaining empathy for all parties involved. I recognize these same essential judicial qualities in Ms. Mariano.

- **Active Listening:** The rare ability to listen without bias, ensuring all voices feel heard even in high-stakes environments.
- **Judicial Demeanor:** A natural inclination toward courtesy and civility, especially when faced with difficult or adversarial situations.
- **Equitable Problem-Solving:** A commitment to finding solutions that are not only legally sound but just and equitable.

Ms. Mariano is deeply rooted in Hawai‘i. She understands the unique cultural and social fabric of O‘ahu, which is vital for a District or Family Court judge who must often address the human element behind the legal case. Her ability to rule with both integrity and compassion ensures that she will treat every individual who enters her courtroom with the respect they deserve.

I am confident that Simeona Mariano’s thoughtful deliberation and commitment to the rule of law will make her an outstanding addition to the Hawai‘i State Judiciary. I wholeheartedly endorse her confirmation without reservation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Marites Galamgam, TA-Vice Principal, Ka'imiloa Elementary School

Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Character Reference for Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Patrick B. Corpuz, and I am writing this letter in full support of Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano who has recently been selected to serve as District Court Judge of the First Circuit.

I have known Simeona her entire life as her uncle and a close family member. As my eldest niece and the eldest grandchild in our family, she has always held a special place in our lives and has consistently demonstrated the qualities of leadership, compassion, integrity, and responsibility that define her character today.

From childhood, Simeona was raised with strong values centered on honesty, respect, and doing what is right. She naturally stepped into the role of leader and caregiver among her sibling and younger cousins, helping to guide and support them as they grew up. These early responsibilities shaped her into an individual who is dependable, self-disciplined, and deeply aware of the importance of her words and actions. Even then, her strong moral compass and sense of responsibility were unmistakable.

As an adult, Simeona has continued to excel. She is currently a Deputy Attorney General since 2007, and throughout her legal career she has consistently demonstrated integrity, diligence, and exceptional professional judgment. Simeona approaches her work with a seriousness and dedication that reflects her respect for the law and the communities she serves. Her strong work ethic, attention to detail, and ability to analyze complex issues are hallmarks of her character as well as her legal training.

In addition to her legal knowledge, Simeona has shown remarkable commitment to public service. Her work has always been guided by a genuine desire to help others and to uphold justice. She treats every individual with respect and compassion, and she never loses sight of the impact that legal decisions have on real people and families. Her empathy, paired with her professionalism, makes her uniquely qualified to serve the public in positions of trust.

I am incredibly proud that Simeona has recently been selected to serve as District Court Judge of the First Circuit. This honor reflects not only her accomplishments and qualifications as an attorney but also her character, integrity, and the confidence she inspires in those around her. She has earned the respect of colleagues, mentors, and

community members alike, and I am certain she will serve the judiciary with fairness, humility, and unwavering dedication to justice.

Simeona embodies the qualities that the Hawai'i State Bar Association seeks to uphold: responsibility, integrity, legal expertise, and a clear commitment to public service. I can say without hesitation that she will continue to represent the profession with honor and will be an asset to the judiciary and the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for considering my letter of support.

Sincerely,

Patrick B. Corpuz

Senate Judiciary Committee

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of my niece, Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano, and her appointment as a District Court Judge of the First Circuit. Although I have known Simeona for 7 years, it did not take long for me to recognize the remarkable person she is both in her personal life and her professional career.

From the moment I met Simeona, what stood out most was her genuine kindness. She carries herself with a calm, thoughtful presence and treats everyone around her with warmth and respect. Even in the short time I've known her, she has shown a level of generosity, compassion, and sincerity that is truly rare. Her love for her family, friends, and community radiates through everything she does.

While my relationship with her is personal, I have also come to admire the dedication she brings to her work as a Deputy Attorney General. It is clear that she approaches her responsibilities with integrity, diligence, and a strong sense of fairness. Simeona is someone who doesn't just understand the law she understands people, and she carries a deep respect for the trust placed in her in public service.

I wholeheartedly believe that Simeona will bring the same integrity, empathy, and professionalism to the bench. Her character, combined with her experience and commitment to justice, makes her an excellent choice for the Hawai'i judicial system. I am proud to support her, and I have no doubt she will serve the District Court of the First Circuit with honor.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,
Jason Gruenwald

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/26/2026 2:30:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ms. Mariano will be a phenomenal addition to the bench. I have worked with Ms. Mariano on child welfare cases for the last four years. Ms. Mariano is well versed in the law and a resource for those who work with her. She is also compassionate and truly cares about those impacted by her work. I have observed Ms. Mariano as being decisive, conscientious and capable. I support Ms. Mariano's appointment as a district court Judge.

Robert S. Miyashita
735 Bishop Street #411
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 26, 2026

Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St., Room 228
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-586-6130
Fax: 808-586-6131

RE: Written Testimony in Support of Simeona Mariano for the District Court of the First Circuit (O'ahu) Judicial Position

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

I write in strong and unequivocal support of Simeona Mariano for the District Court of the First Circuit judicial position.

I have had the privilege of serving alongside Simeona on the Hawai'i State Bar Association Board of Directors (O'ahu). Through that service, I have come to know her not only as a very capable attorney, but as a person of integrity, humility, and genuine commitment to community service. She approaches every responsibility with preparation, thoughtfulness, and a sincere desire to improve our legal system and communities.

Simeona's dedication to service is demonstrated in her actions. As one example, I desperately was in need of assistance on very short notice when I was the chair of an HSBA committee. I reached out to Simeona only days before the engagement. Without hesitation, she agreed to provide assistance. She completed the task so seamlessly and professionally, despite the short notice and the volume of work required in a condensed period. Consistent with this character of hers, in addition to her many professional and personal responsibilities, I have observed her volunteer her time to serve on numerous HSBA committees, and freely offer help whenever the need arises. She is someone who does not wait to be asked twice. If there is work to be done and someone in need, she contributes her time and efforts willingly and without seeking recognition.

Also, her leadership and involvement in Access to Justice initiatives further reflect her belief that our courts must remain accessible, fair, and responsive, particularly to working families,

minorities, and individuals of limited means. The District Court is often the public's primary point of contact with the judiciary. It serves communities that deserve to see themselves reflected in the courtroom.

Raised on the west side of O'ahu, Simeona understands firsthand the communities the District Court serves. As a Native Hawaiian woman and lifelong public servant, she brings cultural understanding, lived experience, and a grounded perspective that strengthens public confidence in the judiciary. Our courts are strongest when they reflect the people they serve, and Simeona embodies that principle.

Professionally, Simeona brings more than two decades of courtroom experience across District, Circuit, and Family Court. As a Special Prosecuting Attorney and Deputy Attorney General in both the Criminal Justice and Family Law Divisions, she has tried cases before judges and juries, handled felony prosecutions, conducted grand jury and preliminary hearings, and served as lead counsel in contested Child Welfare Services trials and appeals. She has presided over matters involving guardianships, juvenile proceedings, and involuntary hospitalization hearings, cases requiring decisiveness, fairness, and compassion.

Her breadth of trial experience, prosecutorial background, and familiarity with courtroom procedure uniquely position her to manage the diverse and fast-paced docket of the District Court. Equally important, she possesses the judicial temperament essential for the role: calm, measured, respectful, and guided by fairness.

Simeona has always acted in the best interests of serving her community and improving the systems within which she works. Her confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit would be a benefit not only to the judiciary, but to the people of Hawai'i.

I respectfully and strongly urge her confirmation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Miyashita', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert S. Miyashita

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/26/2026 9:02:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Margaret Villaro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support JC 24

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/26/2026 9:10:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monalisa Cabiles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

She is well qualified for this position and is very trustworthy. And have faith in her judgment.

Thank you very much

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/26/2026 9:49:53 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Datanagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony

My name is Cynthia Datanagan. I am a relative of Mrs. Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano and have known her since birth. Throughout the years I've known her, she has shown great intelligence, compassion, empathy and determination in achieving fair equality in complex matters.

I am a retired Support Payments Officer at Dept of Attorney Office and know how complex and sensitive family court issues are so family law need to be enforced by judicial workers who fully understands the statutes.

Therefore, I am fully supportive and hopeful in your consideration and confirmation to appoint Mrs. Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano as a judge to the District Court of the First Circuit.

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/26/2026 9:58:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Valoroso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am pleased to offer my support for Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano for the appointment of judge of the District Court of First Circuit.

I worked with Ms. Mariano from August 2003 to December 2004 when she served as a law clerk for the Honorable George Masuoka. I was Judge Masuoka's judicial assistant at the time.

Even as a young professional, Ms.Mariano demonstrated a disciplined work ethic. She was diligent in her research and well prepared for court proceedings. She had a confident yet calm demeanor and always conducted herself in a professional manner. She got along well with her peers and was always respectful and courteous to staff and the public.

I firmly believe that Ms.Mariano has the qualities to be an outstanding District Court judge and I kindly urge you to give her your strongest support.

Sincerely,

Lori Valoroso

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 7:26:41 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Ikeda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting this letter in support of Simeona Mariano. I have worked with Simeona on the 587 (Child Abuse and Neglect) calendar for several years. During this time, she has consistently demonstrated diligence, passion and an unwavering commitment to advocating for the safety and interest of the children of Hawaii.

Simeona is open, collaborative, and easy to engage with. She brings deep knowledge and sound judgement to her cases. Her character and professionalism make her an asset to the Judicial Community. I offer strong support for Simeona's appointment as Judge.

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 8:31:50 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Mannle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony on JC24

Committee on Judiciary

Dear Senators Rhoads and Gabbard,

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide testimony for the Committee's consideration and in support of confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit of Judicial Nominee SIMEONA LYNN LILIUOKALANI AHUNA MARIANO.

As background, I am an attorney with twenty-eight years of experience in federal, state, and private practice. I retired from the United States Marine Corps in 2014, having served two tours at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay and at Camp Smith during my career.

I worked side-by-side with Ms. Mariano as a fellow Deputy Attorney General (DAG) from 2021-2022 at the Family Law Division (FLD) in Kapolei until my departure for another opportunity. Our duties at FLD included time and issue sensitive child custody matters (hearings, mediations, and contested trials) and necessitated working with social workers and various state employees in furtherance of the State's interest in children's well-being. At the same time, we had to remain mindful of the rights of parents to raise their children, and the fact that, barring neglect and abuse, such rights are sometimes manifested in legally permissible ways with which we might not agree.

I observed Ms. Mariano in the execution of her duties at the Kapolei Judiciary Complex several times per week. Her dealings with the social workers assigned to her cases and before the Court were of the highest integrity. She was steadfast in exacting the evidence needed from social workers to support the State's position, and unafraid to say so if a case did not support custody intervention. She was equally able and willing to make concise and pointed arguments in presenting the State's evidence and putting its best foot forward before the Court in emotional and hotly contested "close call" cases.

The Family Court system is driven by multiple time-sensitive deadlines requiring diligence to keep a case moving toward resolution without a child falling through the cracks, and Ms. Mariano's efficiency and organization in the face of a high caseload were notable. She was always prepared, always on time. As she had served as a DAG for several years prior to my arrival, I relied on her legal knowledge and ability on numerous occasions as I sought to learn an entirely new system, seeking her insight on investigative approaches and persuasive advocacy.

Ms. Mariano's judicial temperament is another quality that makes her an ideal nominee. She was cordial with her peers and a consummate team player, selflessly willing to assist if needed in standing in at a hearing or "second seating" in a complex matter as she continued to drive her own caseload. She was respected by opposing counsel and able to work with them when interests were aligned, but never hesitant to go to the mat for her client. I have no doubt of her ability to make impartial calls based on the evidence before her, without regard to who is presenting it.

Serving as a DAG is public service in its own right, and Ms. Mariano has made a career of it. I believe that this career has put her in an excellent position for further service as a judge, and have no reservation about her ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties thereof. Her experience, her energy, and her commitment to ethical zealous advocacy make her an ideal nominee. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

John A. Mannle

Sheri L. Ritter
Attorney At Law
111 Hekili St., Suite A-130
Kailua, Hawai'i 96734
Telephone: (808) 349-2588
e-mail: ritterr001@hawaii.rr.com

March 27, 2026

Honorable Committee Members:

I strongly support the confirmation of Simeona Mariano to District Court of the First Circuit.

I have had the privilege of working with Ms. Mariano for more than ten years and have found her to be a conscientious, professional, and dedicated attorney. She knows her cases, is able to synthesize lots of information, know the facts, and apply the applicable law. She listens to alternate points of view and is always courteous.

I have no doubt that as a Judge, Ms. Mariano will listen to all parties, apply the law, and provide a fair and well-reasoned judgement.

We will greatly miss Ms. Mariano, but our loss will be a great gain for whomever appears in front of her.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Sheri L. Ritter, Esq.

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 11:59:15 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa lubick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Melissa Lubick, and I am a DHS social worker. I have worked for the Department for about 9 years now. I am writing this on behalf of Simeona Mariano.

My personal experience with her as my DAG has always been positive. I trust her to give me sound legal advice throughout my cases. I also appreciate her fresh prospective on the situations and the families we serve.

As a Native Hawaiian, born and raised in Oahu, I believe Ms. Mariano brings a prospective to cases that is not only realistic, but also focused on the people of Hawai'i.

if she were to be confirmed as a judge for district court, she would have an opportunity to help a larger population, all while upholding the law and its spirit. Her absence from Family Court would be felt deeply; however, her knowledge of the law, her hard work, and compassion, should be used on a larger scale where she could provide a greater impact.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

With respect,

Melissa lubick

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 1:10:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I have known Ms Mariano since 2006 when I was a Deputy Attorney General for the State of Hawaii assigned to the Criminal Justice Division as a team leader. It was a pleasure to work and supervise Ms. Mariano. She worked hard and was fair in her plea offers. She has the right judicial temperament and legal skills and would be an asset to the bench and community.

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 5:51:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elisa Kawaihalau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Elisa Kawaihalau and I am honored to offer my strongest support for Simeona (Simmy) Mariano's appointment to the bench. Although our lineage says we're second cousins, I consider Simmy to be my sister and one of my best friends. As both a family member and someone who has closely observed her professional journey, I can confidently speak to the character, integrity, and qualifications she would bring to the role of judge.

Simmy and I grew up on different islands but around 2006, when she was working at the Prosecuting Attorneys Office on Kauai and I was working at the SOH Judiciary, Traffic Operations Branch, we started spending more time together and quickly bonded over family, friends and shared interests. I can say, with absolute certainty, that Simmy's levelheaded attitude and belief in justice and compassion will make her an excellent judge.

Throughout her career as an attorney, Simmy has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to justice, fairness, and ethical practice. She approaches every case with diligence, respect for the law, and a deep understanding of the impact judicial decisions have on individuals and the community. Her legal knowledge is matched by sound judgment, patience, and the ability to listen carefully before reaching conclusions—qualities that are essential for an effective and respected judge.

Simmy has been there with and for me in so many ways and for so many years. Anytime I needed her, the only words out of her mouth were, "How can I help?", four little words that were not lost on me and I reflect on often. Although she would literally be a judge in this position, she is not a judgmental person. Her natural instinct is to help people, which is such a vital trait to have when dealing with the situations that will come before her.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, she is a person of strong moral character. She treats others with dignity and respect, regardless of background or circumstance, and consistently shows compassion without compromising fairness. These values are reflected not only in her work but in how she engages with her community and supports those around her.

I have no doubt that Simmy would serve with integrity, impartiality, and dedication. Her combination of legal expertise, temperament, and commitment to justice makes her exceptionally well-suited for a judgeship. I believe that she will serve her role with courage and fairness based on the law and wholeheartedly recommend her for this position.

Sincerely,
Elisa Kawaihalau

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate,

I am writing to offer my strongest support for the nomination of Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano to the position of Judge. It's an honor and my privilege to speak on behalf of someone I have known for 36 years as a very close friend of mine who has always demonstrated the highest level of integrity.

Simeona is an honest person, a good decision maker and demonstrates a deep respect for the rule of law. Her strong moral foundation guides every aspect of her personal and professional life. She is a very hard worker and approaches every task with focus, discipline, and attention to detail. Her work ethic shows she is driven, being an attorney for 19 years and counting. She approaches every responsibility with careful attention and a commitment to excellence. You can depend on her to get the job done well.

She has an extensive legal knowledge of the law and applies her knowledge with clarity and sound judgment. Along with her professional experience as a lawyer she is well prepared to apply the law fairly and effectively. Her patience and calm respectful demeanor allows her to consider all perspectives before making a decision which makes her well-suited for the bench.

I am confident that Simeona has both the qualifications and character necessary to fulfill the duties of a judge with excellence.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Louise L. Nahina

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 6:25:13 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
samuel corpuz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is **Samuel Peter Corpuz**, and I am providing this testimony based on my own personal knowledge and experience.

I have known **Simeona** my entire life. She is my **cousin**, but I have always considered her my **sister**. From childhood to now, she has consistently shown integrity, honesty, and strong moral character.

One moment from my childhood has stayed with me for years. I remember receiving some money as a kid, and someone stole it from me. I was being scolded for it, even though I didn't fully understand the importance of money at that age.

Simeona stepped in and defended me. She protested on my behalf and made it clear that it wasn't my fault. Even as a young person, she understood the importance of standing up for someone and doing what was right.

That moment showed me exactly who she was — someone who protects others, someone who tells the truth, and someone who acts with integrity even when it's difficult. Throughout my life, she has continued to be that same kind of person.

She is one of the people I have always looked up to, and she remains someone I strive to be like in terms of character.

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and reflects my honest experience.

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 6:35:45 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
paris-julian geronimo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Paris, and I have known Simeona for more than ten years. Over that time, I've had the chance to see who she is not just on the surface, but in the way she shows up for the people around her. Our relationship has grown through different seasons of life, and I've watched her remain consistent, loyal, and genuine. She is someone who cares deeply, who listens, and who stands by the people she loves. After knowing her for this long, I can say with confidence that she is a person of character, heart, and integrity.

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 6:48:42 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darlene Ahuna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We, Harold and Darlene Ahuna, parents of Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano, would like to offer our wholehearted support for our daughter’s appointment as a Judge in the District Court of the First Circuit.

As her parents, we have had the privilege of watching Simeona grow into the woman she is today. From a young age, she showed a natural sense of responsibility, fairness, and compassion. Over the years, those qualities only deepened. She has always carried herself with honesty, respect, and humility — values we worked hard to instill in our children, and which she now lives out every day.

Being of Hawaiian and Filipino ancestry, Simeona understands the importance of representation, cultural grounding, and serving her community with integrity. We know she will be a strong role model for young women across Hawai‘i, especially those who hope to see themselves reflected in positions of leadership and service.

We have watched her dedicate herself to her education, her career, and her community with unwavering commitment. Her integrity, legal expertise, and genuine care for others are evident in everything she does. As parents, we could not be more proud of the path she has chosen and the heart she brings to her work.

We say with complete confidence that Simeona will continue to serve with honor, fairness, and compassion. She will be an asset to the judiciary and to the people of Hawai‘i, and we fully support her appointment.

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:00:20 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
steven corpuz jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, **Steven Corpuz Jr**, fully support **Simeona Mariano** in her new role as judge. She has consistently shown integrity, fairness, and dedication to our community. I believe she will serve with honor and uphold the responsibilities of the position with excellence.

DEREK R. KOBAYASHI

TOPA FINANCIAL CENTER
745 FORT STREET · SUITE 1500
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

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March 29, 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: Jud. Comm. No. 2 – Chief Justice's Appointment Order No. 2026-2
Nomination of SIMEONA MARIANO, ESQ. to Judge, District Court
of the First Circuit, State of Hawai'i – **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Judiciary Committee Members:

I write to express my ***strong support*** of Chief Justice McKenna's nomination of Simeona Mariano, Esq. to the position of Judge, District Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai'i. I have known "Simmy" for many years, having first met her through colleagues who were then serving as Deputies Attorney General. Throughout the years, we have maintained a close professional relationship and I am very familiar with Simmy's background, practice, legal experience and qualifications to serve as a District Court Judge.

She is very knowledgeable on a wide array of Hawai'i law and her service, most recently as a Deputy A.G. in the Family Law Division and previously, as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for the County of Kauai, handling District, Family, and Circuit Court cases, gives her a depth of legal experience that underscores her qualification to serve as District Court judge. Simmy has also served to support the legal profession as a Director on the Board of the Hawai'i State Bar Association.

I have had the privilege of recently volunteering with Simmy in the Hawai'i Supreme Court's Courts in the Community project. She was excellent in explaining the case and procedure to the students and, as anticipated, was diligent in the preparation for the project as she has been in her legal work.

I am also familiar with Simmy's service as a fellow Commissioner on the Hawai'i Access to Justice Commission. It was no surprise to me that she expressed an interest in serving as a Commissioner and we have enjoyed her active participation in that capacity as yet another means by which she continues to provide public service, facilitating access to justice for those who cannot afford legal representation.

Simmy is very fair, compassionate, and always pleasant. She will no doubt bring an engaging judicial temperament to the bench and has the demeanor that will serve the people of Hawai'i well in all matters before the District Court of the First Circuit.

Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Page 2

In summary, Simeona Mariano, Esq. will fulfill all of the responsibilities and duties of the position to which she has been nominated - Judge of the District Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai'i – and I strongly support her nomination by Chief Justice McKenna.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Very truly yours,



Derek R. Kobayashi

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 10:55:29 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tracy L Bringas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Tracy L Bringas. I have the privilege of knowing Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano her entire life and was honored to serve as her godmother at her baptism in 1978. She is honest, humble, faithful, loyal, trustworthy and dependable. I am confident that she will bring fairness, wisdom, and diligence to the bench and will serve with integrity and distinction.

Sincerely,

Tracy L Bringas

DAVID L. WILLIAMS

5881 S. 152ND STREET, APT. D302 | TUKWILA, WA 98188
808-554-7132 | DLWONOHU@GMAIL.COM

MARCH 29, 2026

Senate Committee on Judiciary
The Thirty-Third Legislature
Regular Session of 2026

Re: JC 24 Circuit Judicial Nominee SIMEONA MARIANO – Written Testimony

Chairs Rhoads and Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Please accept these comments in STRONG SUPPORT of Ms. Simeona Mariano consideration and confirmation.

As a former Deputy Attorney General in the Criminal Justice Division for 12 years (retired in August, 2025), I have had the privilege of being mentored by and working closely with Ms. Mariano in the Department of the Attorney General. I was very impressed by her legal mind and her experience with handling a wide variety of criminal cases, ranging from District Court cases to Circuit Court cases on multiple islands. One of the more complex cases that she prosecuted was the Kaloko Dam failure on Kauai. Ms. Mariano assisted another deputy, boring through complex discovery, resulting in charging the case on behalf of the State of Hawaii. Witnessing Ms. Mariano handle cases of that complexity as well as handling the prosecution of a wide array of criminal cases on all islands, left a lasting impression on me of her legal skills and experience. Ms. Mariano also went on to work in our Department's Family Law Division, putting in even more years of handling family court cases.

Ms. Mariano is hardworking, qualified, and ethical. Her ability to handle a high volume of caseloads over many years will no doubt transfer well to the busy District Court setting. Based on my professional experiences and knowledge of her, I submit my STRONG support of Ms. Mariano's consideration and confirmation.

Sincerely,
/S/ DAVID L. WILLIAMS

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 12:48:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Anfinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: JC24 in support of Simeona Mariano

Dear Committee:

I am writing to express my support for Simeona Mariano's appointment as a judge. I have known Ms. Mariano both professionally and personally for over 15 years. I have always been impressed by her unwavering integrity and dedication to government service.

I have seen Ms. Mariano handle high-pressure situations with grace and impartiality. Her many years as a Deputy Attorney General with the Hawaii State Attorney General's Office shows a sincere commitment to justice and servicing the community.

I believe Ms. Mariano possesses the temperament and intellect necessary to be a fair and effective judge.

Sincerely,

Malia Anfinson

Mark M. Murakami

March 29, 2026

Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Senate
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Simeona Mariano, Esq. - Nominee, District Court of the First Circuit

I write to express my strong support for the confirmation of Simeona Mariano, Esq. as a District Judge of the First Circuit.

I am the Immediate Past President of the Hawai'i State Bar Association, but I write today solely in my personal capacity and on my individual behalf. Through my service in bar leadership, I have developed a deep appreciation for the judiciary's ongoing and significant need for highly competent, well-qualified, and even-tempered judicial officers, particularly at the district court level. District Court judges serve at the front lines of Hawai'i's justice system, and the effectiveness, fairness, and public confidence in our courts depend fundamentally on the caliber of those selected to serve.

I know Ms. Mariano from her time as a Director on the Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association. She played a critical role on the HSBA Board and personally vetted several nominees for judicial office and was active in HSBA operations. She has deep and abiding commitment to public service and to our community.

I have asked Ms. Mariano to seek judicial office and I am thrilled that she has applied for service at the District Court. In addition to her professional qualifications, I can personally attest to Ms. Mariano's temperament, professionalism, and sound judgment. She approaches legal issues thoughtfully, treats litigants and opposing counsel with respect, and demonstrates the patience and balance essential for service on the District Court bench. Based on my experience and observations, I am confident that she possesses both the experience and disposition necessary to serve the people of Hawai'i with integrity and fairness.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to advance her nomination and vote to confirm her.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark M. Murakami

1003 Bishop Street, Suite 1600
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
mmm@hawaiilawyer.com
(808) 531-8031

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 4:25:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colette Honda	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhodes and Committee on Judiciary Members,

It is my distinct pleasure to submit testimony IN SUPPORT of JC 24, the consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, SIMEONA LYNN LILIUOKALANI AHUNA MARIANO.

I've known Simeona for over 20 years since our days at the William S. Richardson School of Law. I first coached Simeona for the Hispanic Moot Court Team. Kirsha was always prepared, thoughtful, and worked well with her teammates and later coaches. Her writing skills and oral argument were outstanding.

Some of the qualities I admire in Simeona are her care for people and down-to-earth demeanor. She certainly has the legal skills and an even temperament which will serve her well.

I wholeheartedly support Simeona's confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, without reservations.

Colette Honda

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 6:59:10 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doreen Higa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Doreen Higa. I am honored to strongly support Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano in her appointment to the District Court of the First Circuit (island of O'ahu).

As an extended ohana member, my relationship with Ms. Mariano is personal, not professional. She embodies her close-knit, culturally diverse family upbringing, evidenced in her intelligence, humility, and compassion, dedicated to family with a strong sense of community. I hope it is obvious that I hold her in high esteem.

As a retired DOE Speech-Language Pathologist experienced working on behalf of students in Family Court with Guardians Ad Litem, I learned that Judges come with more than extensive legal knowledge, but as important, intangible qualities such as compassion and cultural competence, that which renders fair, legal and personalized verdicts. To become that Judge, one's personal family background must be balanced equally with legal knowledge, professional experience, judicial temperament and public service.

I truly believe Ms. Mariano has the personal qualities and necessary educational, legal and public service experiences that will make her an excellent District Court Judge. I strongly recommend her appointment to the District Court of the First Circuit (island of O'ahu).

Sincerely,

Doreen Y. Higa

1634 Nuuanu Avenue #405

Honolulu, HI 96817

DEREK D. PETERSON

🏠 Kaneohe, Hawai'i 96744 ✉ derek-peterson@hotmail.com

March 29, 2026

Re: JC 24; Support of Simeona Mariano's Nomination to the District Court of the First Circuit

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

I write in strong support of Simeona (“Simmy”) Mariano’s nomination to the District Court of the First Circuit. I have worked closely with Simmy as a deputy attorney general in the Family Law Division of the Department of the Attorney General since 2023, and even before that, our paths intersected in child welfare cases when I served as a court-appointed guardian ad litem. Over that time, I have come to know Simmy both as a colleague and as a close personal friend. Because Simmy’s qualifications and credentials speak for themselves and will be well-documented in the record, I will not repeat them here. Instead, I offer a perspective that is harder to capture on paper but just as important in evaluating a judicial nominee: Simmy’s professional habits and how she treats the people around her.

Simmy has the discipline and attention to detail required to manage the demands of a high-volume District Court calendar. Simmy’s files are consistently among the most organized and well-maintained I have encountered, and she prepares for hearings with a level of thoroughness that sets the standard for those around her. I routinely point to Simmy’s work product and preparation as a model for newer deputies.

Just as important, Simmy is a team player who approaches her work with kindness and sensitivity toward everyone she encounters. Simmy regularly steps in to cover cases for me and others without hesitation, not for recognition, but because she understands the collaborative nature of our work. That same mindset carries through to our broader professional community. Simmy treats social workers, support staff, bailiffs, and court clerks with the same level of respect she shows other attorneys and judges. In other words, she treats everyone with equal dignity regardless of position, a quality that cannot be overstated, especially in the super hierarchical environment that governs the legal profession. I have seen this firsthand in small but meaningful ways, including taking the time to treat our secretaries to lunch and ensuring their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated.

In her work on child welfare cases, and particularly in her role as the deputy attorney general assigned to Family Treatment Court (formerly known as Family Drug Court), Simmy brings humanity to difficult and emotionally sensitive situations. She understands that many of the individuals and families who come before the court are navigating instability, trauma, and limited resources. She approaches her cases by holding expectations without ever losing sight of the humanity of the person in front of her. That balance is not easy to strike, and it is one that will translate directly to the bench.

Simmy is also committed to mentoring the next generation of attorneys. Simmy and I have worked together coaching law students through the Child Welfare Clinic at the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawai‘i. Simmy has shared her hope to continue her mentorship from the bench by, among other things, offering thoughtful feedback to newer attorneys when appropriate. Having benefited from judges who took the time to do the same early in my career, I know how meaningful that can be—and how rare.

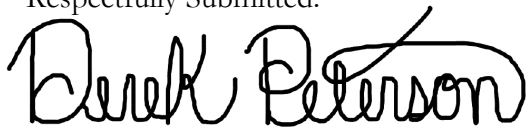
Additionally, Simmy brings a sense of humor to the work. In a system that can often feel heavy, she knows how to keep perspective and connect with people without diminishing the seriousness of the proceedings. That ability to balance gravity with humanity is a quiet strength, and one that will serve her well on the bench.

All of these qualities form the foundation of how Simmy practices, and they are exactly what will make her an outstanding judge.

For all of these reasons, in addition to the strong professional commendations demonstrated throughout the rest of the record, I enthusiastically support Simmy's nomination and respectfully urge the Committee to confirm her. I am confident Simmy will distinguish herself on the bench and serve the people of Hawai'i with integrity and lasting impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derek Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long, horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Derek D. Peterson

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

My name is Trevor Coyle, and I'm writing this letter of support in my personal capacity as a citizen of Honolulu County. I'm writing to express my support for Simeona ("Simmy") Mariano's nomination to the District Court of the First Circuit of Hawai'i. I've come to know Simmy through my partner Derek Peterson, who has worked with her for several years in their roles as deputy attorneys general, and I feel lucky to count myself as a friend of such a quality, high-integrity, smart, and dedicated person. In the time that I've gotten to know Simmy, she has demonstrated numerous qualities that would serve Hawai'i's communities well on the bench. Time and time again, across different contexts and interactions, I have seen her demonstrate humility, kindness, understanding, and generosity to everyone she interacts with. Of particular note, her generosity and desire to make others feel included and welcomed is completely independent of someone's title or experience, thus demonstrating a behavioral commitment to equity, rather than just commitment to it "on paper." One really gets the sense around Simmy that she truly embodies the Aloha Spirit and goes out of her way – both personally and professionally – to make everyone feel equally valued, understood, and welcome around her. These qualities, in addition to her clear yet accessible command of legal doctrine and principles of equity, would benefit any courtroom or litigants lucky enough to be in Simmy's presence.

Additionally, when there is an opportunity to uplift local voices and promote representation of Native Hawaiian individuals to positions of power, I believe this minimizes the potential impacts of harmful bias against local communities and maximizes the ability for lived experience and empathy to merge with legal expertise, thus invigorating what justice can mean for Hawai'i. As such, Simmy's ancestry and ties to local communities only strengthens her ability to serve local communities in a uniquely impactful way.

In sum, I am proud to voice my support as a citizen for Simmy and ask that the Committee confirm her nomination. Thank you for your consideration.

Warmly,

/s/ Trevor Coyle

Trevor Coyle, PhD, ABPP

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 10:19:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Donlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

I testify in support of Ms. Mariano's confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit. Her background and professional qualities will make her an excellent judge.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony, which I submit in my individual capacity.

Amanda Donlin

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 12:19:20 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Mariano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's amazing to have had a front row seat to Simeona's journey from being a law clerk and prosecutor on Kauai to deputy attorney general in the criminal justice and family court divisions. She is incredibly thorough; she takes the time to truly understand the processes, to help ensure her work is always clear, comprehensive, and highly reliable. She takes on challenges, isn't afraid to ask for help and is receptive to feedback. She's constantly learning and evolving, showing her deep commitment to the people she serves. I strongly support her nomination to the District Court of the First Circuit.

3/29/26

I have worked with her for several years with the state Department which allows me to work closely with Simeona when my clients are involved with the Judicial System. If ever I needed the assistance of the Deputy Attorney General's Office, my experience with Simeona has always been positive. Her role has been always proper and diligent when representing me whenever court was involved with any of my cases.

Simeona has always taken the time to review with me individually any of my issues prior to any hearings so she is adequately prepared to report to court my perspective and side of any case.

For me, her timeliness and knowledge of the legal system has always been an asset for my cases which involve the Judiciary. During the time that I've known her since the start of her joining Family Court in 2016, she always has shown her compassion for her work and always striving to do more when needed.

She has shown caring characteristics to everyone she encounters, and I am privileged to even see her outside of her role as a Deputy Attorney General. Simeona is hard working but also a caring spouse and always goes above and beyond for extended family and friends.

Simeona has always been trustworthy and dependable both professionally and personally. I feel that her experiences with Family Court as a representative for Department of Health and Department of Human Services will be a tremendous asset on fulfilling her role as a Judge. She has always been collaborative and willing to take input from everyone. I know her to be fair and honest and has the ability to take objective data versus Subjective to resolve any issues.

Sincerely,

Lenny Kudaishi

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 7:59:35 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kris Osumi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the confirmation of Simeona Ahuna Mariano. I have known her for over 20 years. She has always been compassionate, trustworthy, and honest. She will be a great judge.

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:35:57 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aurene Padilla	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the JDC Committee,

My name is Aurene Padilla, and I enthusiastically support the confirmation of Simeona Mariano to the Judiciary of the District Court of the First Circuit.

As an older cousin of a very large family, I have watched Simeona grow up. She has always been mature for her age, studious, serious, and focused. Simeona and I returned to the University of Hawai'i for graduate school at the same time, and I was able to interact with her and her peers while she attended Law School. She always handled herself professionally. It was obvious that she would be an asset to Hawaii's Bar Association.

Since graduation, Simeona has held a variety of positions that showcased her ability to uphold the law while making our community better. She has devoted much time to volunteering across different spaces. Her dedication to the judicial system is outstanding.

I know that Simeona will be an asset to the Judiciary not only because of her professionalism, intellect, and work ethic, but also because she has deep ties to her community and home. She is empathetic but fair and will use these traits to rule justly.

I proudly support Simeona Mariano's confirmation to the judiciary.

Sincerely yours,

Aurene Padilla

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:41:42 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jasery Luis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Re: JC 24, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the First Circuit Court, Gubernatorial Nominee, Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano.

My name is Jasery Luis, a Biology Teacher at James Campbell High School, and first-cousin to Simeona Mariano, writing in full support for her consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee.

Simeona leads with integrity, fairness, and intention.

While I have personal relation to Simeona, I have seen her dedication and work ethic throughout her career and have witnessed her conduct herself ethically and fairly, putting her community first in all aspects. She is a respectable individual and has proven herself a reliable and integral part of the community she serves.

She will serve the State of Hawai'i ethically and compassionately.

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:43:43 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiwi Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kaiwi Ching and it is my privilege to submit this letter in strong support of Simeona (“Simmy”) Mariano’s nomination to the District Court of the First Circuit. Having known Simmy for over a decade, I can attest without reservation that she possesses the legal acumen and judicial temperament necessary to serve effectively on the bench.

I first met Simmy during my tenure as a Deputy Attorney General with the Family Law Division. From the beginning, it was immediately evident that Simmy possessed a natural ability to work collaboratively with the court, parents, and service providers to achieve the best possible outcome for the child and all those involved in the child welfare system. Her professionalism and unwavering ethics will allow her to bring sound judgement and impartiality to each case she presides over. I humbly thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for this appointment.

Sincerely,

Kaiwi Ching

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:43:43 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Higa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to offer my strong support for Simeona Mariano to the District One Circuit Court. I believe she demonstrates the character, integrity, and dedication necessary to contribute meaningfully to the court and to the community it serves.

Simeona Mariano exemplifies professionalism, fairness, and a deep respect for the rule of law. Her commitment to serving others, along with her ability to approach matters thoughtfully and responsibly, makes her well-suited for work within the judicial system. She understands the importance of impartiality and the impact that court decisions have on individuals and families.

In addition, her strong work ethic, attention to detail, and respectful demeanor ensure that she engages with others in a manner that promotes trust and confidence. These qualities are essential in supporting the mission of the District One Circuit Court to provide justice that is fair, efficient, and accessible.

For these reasons, I fully support Simeona Mariano and am confident that she will be a valuable asset to the District One Circuit Court.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tiffany Higa

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:51:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isaac Higa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my support for Simeona Mariano.

She demonstrates integrity, professionalism and a strong commitment to fairness.

She will serve with confidence, respect and dedication.

Thank you,

Isaac Higa



mitsuyama + rebman
DIVORCE AND FAMILY LAW

Mauka Tower, Suite 2500
733 Bishop Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Ph. (808)545-7035
Fax (808) 369-8349

March 21, 2026

VIA E-mail

Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 969813

RE: JC 24 Hearing March 31, 2026 9:30 a.m. Conf Room 016
SUPPORT FOR SIMEONA MARIANO
Judicial appointment to the District Court of the First Circuit

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing to express my strong support for Ms. Mariano's acting Chief Justice's appointment to the District Court of the First Circuit. Having worked alongside her for several years on the HSBA Judicial Administration Committee (JAC) and observed her work as a Deputy Attorney General (DAG) in the Family Law Division, I can attest to her exceptional qualifications.

Ms. Mariano's resilience in pursuing a judicial position speaks volumes about her integrity and dedication. Despite the arduous nature of the application process, her persistence demonstrates a deep commitment to public service.

Through our shared experience on the JAC Family Law Subcommittee, I have seen her exhibit a remarkable "can-do" attitude. Even when faced with unfamiliar duties, she took the initiative to learn quickly—volunteering to contact speakers, prepare agendas, and field complex questions with poise.

As a DAG, she is an expert in her field who remains professional under pressure. In my experience, she has never lost her composure with opposing counsel or the public, a trait that is essential for a judge.

Having served as a *per diem* judge since 2015, I am intimately familiar with the demands of the District Court. I am confident that Ms. Mariano possesses the temperament and legal expertise to make a seamless transition to the "People's Court." I recommend her for this appointment without reservation.

I urge you to confirm her appointment.

Very Truly Yours,

/s/Dyan K. Mitsuyama

LATE

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 9:31:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryce Kitashiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am honored to write this letter in strong support of Simeona Mariano’s nomination for a judgeship in the State of Hawai‘i.

I have had the privilege of knowing Simeona personally for almost 15 years, and I can confidently say that she embodies the qualities essential to an excellent judge: integrity, sound judgment, fairness, and a deep respect for the law and the people it serves. Simeona approaches every situation with thoughtfulness and care, consistently demonstrating an ability to listen closely, weigh facts objectively, and arrive at balanced, reasoned conclusions.

What distinguishes Simeona is not only her intellect and professionalism, but also his character. She is someone who treats others with dignity and respect, regardless of circumstance. Her steady temperament and commitment to doing what is right—even when it is difficult—are qualities that would serve the bench and the community exceptionally well.

Simeona also possesses a genuine understanding of the diverse communities of Hawai‘i. She appreciates the importance of cultural awareness, empathy, and fairness in administering justice, and she carries herself with humility and a strong sense of responsibility.

I have no doubt that Simeona Mariano would uphold the highest standards of the judiciary and serve with honor and distinction. I offer my full support for his nomination and strongly encourage his appointment.

Sincerely,

Bryce Kitashiro

LATE

Jonathan Fujiyama
801 South Street, Apt 4203
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 30, 2026

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
Senate President
Hawai`i State Capitol, Room 409
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
Email: senkouchi@capitol.hawaii.gov

Re: **Simeona L.L.A. Mariano**, Judicial Nominee for the District Court
Judge of the First Circuit (island of Oahu) State of Hawai`i

Dear Chief Justice Sabrina S. McKenna,

I work with Simeona Mariano (“Simmy”) in the Family Law Division at the Office of the Attorney General. Over her ten-year tenure, she’s demonstrated a mastery of both family and criminal law. We have discussed cases, trial strategies, legal memorandums, research, and the practical application that the law has on the families we serve. Throughout her tenure, she has shown me not only that she has the desire to be knowledgeable about the law, but also that she cares about the people and families that we serve. She also treats everyone one in our office with respect and kindness.

Mrs. Mariano is a natural leader and effective multi-system collaborator. Her premiere skills as an effective communicator combined with a solution-based approach to conflict and change, all the while remaining composed under pressure, garners the respect and integral trust of other colleagues, multi-disciplines and the clients she represents.

In December 2018, her execution of responsibility and authority in an outstanding manner was readily demonstrated when the Oahu Family Law Division volunteered with minimal notice, to meet the Hilo Family Law Division crisis resulting from the departure of their entire legal team. It was a formidable and demanding challenge in terms of logistics, organizational and operations planning, and required significant flexibility to adapt to differences in computer processing systems and procedural differences between the two circuits. The daily round trip commute from

Oahu to Hilo to meet the needs of the third circuit would require an Oahu team that was prepared to meet this daunting task. Simmy rose to command the challenge along with other committed deputies to exceed all expectations. Early 3AM commute workdays, with Hilo arrival direct to court involved covering hearings and/or trials all day while reviewing petitions, managing crisis, critical client interface and adapting to a different computer processing system. Her representation on child abuse cases under the veil of emotionally charged cases, would showcase her expertise and skill set as a compassionate articulate communicator and confident attorney. Exceptional engagement skills and a congenial style of goodwill were evident with Simmy adapting to the “Hilo culture” and establishing rapport with new professionals, while rebuilding the Division. Her outstanding leadership, power of persuasion and delegation of authority lead to a welcome reorganization of practice, priorities, progressive problem-solving strategies and stability for the third circuit, family law division.

Within our office, she continues to volunteer to help, wherever the help is needed, i.e. covering cases in Kauai, Hilo, Kona, and Maui. She also volunteered to be the specialty deputy that handles the Family Drug Court that assists families with substance abuse issues. I have witnessed her taking the extra time to assist newer deputies improve their legal development.

Outside our office she volunteers her time with the HSBA Board of Directors, HSBA Judicial Administration Committee, HSBA Government Lawyers Section, Hawaii Access to Justice, Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association, and the Hawaii Women Lawyers.

Simeona L.L.A. Mariano is a highly qualified law professional and agent for change with a deep respect for the clients she serves. She will be an excellent addition to the State of Hawai`i judicial bench and justice system as a District Court Judge of the First Circuit. She is someone that I trust and can depend on.

Sincerely,

//s// Jonathan M. Fujiyama, Esq.

LATE

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 9:43:00 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvette Corpuz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable members of the Hawaii Senate,

I am writing to offer my strong enthusiastic support for Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano who has been submitted for consideration for a judicial appointment in the State of Hawaii.

I have had the privilege of watching my niece grow up and blossom into this caring, hardworking and successful lawyer she is today. She uses these qualities in her service for the courts everyday. Her work reflects not only a deep understanding of the law, but also a genuine commitment to fairness, equity and the well-being of the people of Hawaii.

Beyond her capabilities, Simeona is a person of strong character. She listens carefully, communicates effectively, treats everyone with dignity and respect- qualities that are essential for a fair and impartial member of the judiciary.

I respectfully urge the Senate to give Mrs. Simeona Mariano your full consideration. She possesses the qualification, temperment and integrity necessary to serve honorably and effectively as a judge in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Yvette S. Corpuz

LATE

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 9:46:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Lester	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To The Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing to provide my support for the confirmation of Simeona Mariano to the District Court of the First Circuit. I have known Ms. Mariano both professionally and personally for over 20 years. I can attest to her exceptional character, intellectual rigor and dedication to the community.

Ms. Mariano is an extremely hard worker and in her practice as a deputy attorney general in CPS cases, she has always exhibited compassion, fairness and judiciousness.

Ms. Mariano will make a great addition to the judiciary.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Lester

LATE

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 2:07:46 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marla Torres Lam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is being submitted in support of Ms. Simeona Ahuna Mariano:

I have known Ms. Mariano since she was at the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, here on Kauai.

As a Victim Witness Counselor, I saw first hand how Ms. Mariano worked with various victims, providing them with her undivided attention, kindness and respect.

She was an Attorney who always displayed professional demeanor and temperament, and was calm and considerate of others.

With Ms. Mariano's strong moral principles, along with her diverse legal background and experience, she would be an excellent candidate to be confirmed for a Judgeship.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (808)652-4894. Thank you for your time and consideration,

Marla Torres-Lam

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 10:28:10 AM
Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
wilfredo tungol	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the Judiciary committee,

I am writing in support of Ms. Simeona Mariano's confirmation to be a district court judge in the First Circuit (Oahu). Ms. Simeona and I are both members of the Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association. Ms. Mariano is well qualified to be a judge in the district court, commonly referred to as the "people's court" by virtue of the fact that most of the parties are not represented by counsel.

Ms. Mariano's social, educational, and legal background qualifies her for this important position. If confirmed, she will be the only Filipino judge in the district court of the First Circuit and this will be a small step in diversifying the make up of our judiciary.

I ask you to act favorably on her confirmation.

Wilfredo Tungol, Esq.

Pearl City, HI

March 30, 2026

LATE

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

This letter is in support of the confirmation of Simeona Mariano to District Court of the First Circuit.

I have had the privilege of working with Ms. Mariano for 10 years in my capacity as a Child Welfare Social Worker to include being a part of the Family Treatment Court.

Ms. Mariano demonstrates a disciplined work ethic and integrity. She is diligent in her research, well prepared for court proceedings, and very punctual. She stands with a posture of confidence yet displays a calm demeanor and always conducts herself in a professional manner. She is dedicated to fostering positive relationships on many different levels. She is respected amongst her peers, courteous to staff, and has a positive influence on the people she serves.

I am in full support of confirmation to appoint Ms. Simeona Mariano as a judge to the District Court of the First Circuit. I am confident she has both the qualifications and character necessary to fulfill the duties of a judge with excellence.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,



Baylene "Kala'i" Thompson
Department of Human Services
Child Welfare Services
C/APS Specialist

LATE

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 10:34:22 AM
Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sirena Hanohano Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Sirena Lei Ipohokuokalani Ahuna Hanohano-Medeiros, strongly support my sister, Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano, for nomination to the District Court of the First Circuit. I am confident she will serve the people of Hawai'i with the utmost respect, integrity, and professionalism. As Simmy's only sibling, I am very proud of her and look forward to the contributions she will make in this role.

LATE

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 10:50:54 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joshua Hanohano-Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Joshua Hanohano-Medeiros, strongly support my sister-in-law, Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano, for nomination to the District Court of the First Circuit. I am confident she will perform her duties with integrity, professionalism, and fairness.

LATE

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 11:23:30 AM
Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allen Dave Luis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Re: JC 24, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the First Circuit Court, Gubernatorial Nominee, Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano.

My name is Allen Luis, an English Teacher at James Campbell High School, Lecturer at Leeward Community College, and cousin-in-law to Simeona Mariano, writing in full support for her consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee.

I was married into Simeona’s family two years ago, but have been around her for the past 6 years. Although I am not related to her by blood, she has become a pillar in my wife and I’s lives, being one of our marriage sponsors and a constant role model. Still, she has the conscience to be transparent to all, even when it may not be what they want to hear; she will say what she believes is right every time.

I have no doubt that Simeona will serve the State of Hawai’i with responsibility and care.

LATE

JC-24

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 6:57:09 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/31/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Domingo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for the nomination of Simeona L.L.A. Mariano to the District Court of the First Circuit.

I had the privilege of working with Ms. Mariano from August 2018 through January 2021 as a fellow Deputy Attorney General in the Family Law Division. When I first joined FLD, she was consistently patient and generous with her time, readily answering my questions as I learned to navigate child welfare cases for the first time.

Throughout our time working together, I was continually impressed by her professionalism and composure. I have never seen Ms. Mariano lose her cool under pressure. She approaches challenging situations with thoughtfulness, steady judgment, and respect for all parties involved. In my view, she embodies the demeanor, temperament, and integrity that are essential qualities for a judge.

I am confident that Ms. Mariano will serve the District Court with distinction and fairness. I respectfully support her nomination without reservation.

Sincerely,

Michael Domingo

March 29, 2026

LATE

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

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

I am writing to give my support to JC 24 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Simeona Lynn Liliuokalani Ahuna Mariano, for a term to expire in 6 years. A hearing is scheduled on Tuesday, the 31st of March, 2026 at 09:30 am via Videoconference.

As a social worker, I have had the pleasure of getting to know Simeona for the past two years. In this time, she has demonstrated the characteristics of a true professional. Not only is Simon knowledgeable about legal proceedings and individual rights, but she has always been helpful and compassionate while negotiating disputes at court. Because Simeona has consistently demonstrated honesty and ethical behavior, and shows a great deal of integrity in her daily life, I am confident that she will continue to make fair judgements with compassion in this new position.

Thank you in advance for considering the confirmation of Simeona. It is clear to me from my many interactions with her that she will have direct positive impacts on the diverse communities found within the State of Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui loa,



Brian O'Hare, PhD, LSW

Honolulu, HI 96817

FAYE T. KIMURA, J.D.
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96821



March 30, 2026

TO: Senate Judiciary Committee

RE: Nomination of Simeona Mariano to the First Circuit District Court

I am writing in support of Simeona Mariano's nomination for appointment as a full-time judge in the First Circuit District Court.

In my past roles as contracted Co-Coordinator of the Judiciary's Hawaii Court Improvement Program from 1995 to July 2024 and Specialist in child welfare law at the University of Hawaii School of Law, I worked with many Family Court practitioners on projects focused on improving the quality of court hearings and legal representation, and collaborating with stakeholders involved in the child welfare system. Simeona was a consistent, valuable participant in all of these efforts during her tenure in the Family Law Division at the State of Hawaii Department of the Attorney General. There is no question in my mind that Simeona, if appointed, will capably and honorably execute her responsibilities as a District Court judge.

I have observed Simeona in court hearings where she demonstrated excellent skills and professional demeanor. She consistently availed herself of the numerous trainings the Court Improvement Program sponsored and demonstrated, in numerous ways, her commitment to improving the complicated child welfare legal system so that the families involved could provide a safe home for their children. Examples of her commitment include volunteering to support the mothers and resource caregivers (aka foster families) of children in foster care during Hawaii Women's Legal Foundation's Mother's Day service project; volunteering to serve as deputy attorney general (DAG) during semiannual Family Court Teen Day mock hearings; and preparing witnesses, serving in the role of DAG during half-day mock trials, and mentoring students from the University of Hawaii School of Law Child Welfare externships.

Simeona's concern for families extends beyond her role as legal counsel. Her compassion, local upbringing, and knowledge of the concrete needs of people in our community are laudable and she will bring compassion and fairness to her role as judge if she is selected.

I strongly urge you to appoint Simeona Mariano as a full-time judge in the First Circuit District Family Court.

Sincerely,

FAYE T. KIMURA

LATE

Debora Lum
99-811 Aliipoe Drive
Aiea, Hawaii 96701
hidebbie66@gmail.com

March 29, 2026

Senate Judiciary Committee
State of Hawaii

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to offer my strong support for Simeona Mariano in their application as a Judicial nominee to the District Court of the First Circuit position in the State of Hawaii. I have had the privilege of knowing her for at least 8 years in my capacity as a Family Court Clerk.

I can positively attest to her exceptional qualifications and character as a retired Family Court Clerk for over 30 years. Simeona Mariano has demonstrated a deep commitment to the law and to the principles of justice since I have known her from the Attorney General's Office.

Simeona Mariano was knowledgeable, submitted her orders in a timely fashion, was responsive and assisted others. She possesses a thorough understanding of legal issues in Family Court cases combined with the ability to apply the law thoughtfully and fairly. In my experience, she consistently exhibits professionalism, integrity and respect for those that come into the courtroom.

Beyond legal expertise, Simeona Mariano has the temperament essential for judicial service. She listens carefully, communicates clearly and approaches each matter with impartiality, sound judgment and being prepared with her cases. These qualities, along with a strong ethical foundation, make her an excellent candidate for the bench.

I have also had personal experience with Simeona Mariano outside of the workplace by attending the same functions with co-workers and other departments that we work closely with. She is very personable, down-to-earth and has a very good demeanor, which is a trait that is needed to work with fellow staff members within the Judiciary and the public.

I recommend Simeona Mariano for this position and I am confident that she will serve the people of Hawaii with fairness and equality.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Debora Lum



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

Simeona L.L.A. Mariano
District Court Judge of the First Circuit (JC24)

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

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

Hearing: Tuesday, March 31, 2026, 9:30 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 JC24, Nomination of Simeona L.L.A. Mariano for the District Court of the First Circuit.

After a rigorous process, described below, the HSBA Board of Directors concluded that Ms. Mariano is **QUALIFIED**. Ms. Mariano has extensive litigation and trial experience, both as a former prosecutor and deputy attorney general. She has practiced in both criminal and civil areas and has a deep dedication to public service. Ms. Mariano is currently serving on the HSBA Board of Directors. It should be noted that her judicial nomination materials, interview, and references were treated equally as all judicial nominees.

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

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

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The comments and letters received from HSBA members reflected an affirmation of Ms. Mariano 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 Ms. Mariano on March 24, 2026, to discuss the subcommittee's findings.
- On March 25, 2026, the HSBA Board of Directors interviewed Ms. Mariano in executive session.
- The HSBA Board deliberated and voted that Ms. Mariano was qualified.

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