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October 31, 2015

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Committee Members  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony In Favor of GM1 – Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge

Dear Sen. Keith-Agaran, Sen. Shimabukuro, and Committee Members,

I fully support the nomination of Judge Shirley M. Kawamura to Circuit Court and respectfully ask for her confirmation.

I am a former Honolulu deputy prosecutor. From 2013 to 2015, I was assigned to Honolulu District Courtroom 7B in the mornings where my cases were heard before Judge Kawamura. In the mornings, Courtroom 7B is primarily used for hearings conducted for defendants suffering from mental disease or defect pursuant to Haw. Rev. Stat. Sec. 704.

Judge Kawamura's knowledge of the statute impressed me. She knew the statutory requirements for committing defendants to the Hawaii State Hospital, placing defendants on conditional release, and discharging defendants from hospital commitment. Judge Kawamura was also very familiar with the appropriate order forms for each disposition. In all of my contested hearings, Judge Kawamura always made clear, reasoned judgments supported by the evidence presented.

Besides her mastery of Haw. Rev. Stat. Sec. 704, Judge Kawamura is a qualified trial judge. In the cases I tried before Judge Kawamura, she consistently based her rulings on the facts and the relevant laws. Judge Kawamura ensures that the prosecution and defense litigate the key issues and refrain from the irrelevant ones. She is fair in that she allows both sides to argue their case before making a final ruling.

Judge Kawamura will easily relate to and assist a Circuit Court jury in making the proper decisions. Although she is a consummate professional, Judge Kawamura remains humble and

personable. Whenever I see her, Judge Kawamura cordially greets me and talks to me as a colleague. However in court, she is objective and makes sound decisions. This is an extremely rare quality to find in a judge and is a gift Judge Kawamura offers to Circuit Court. She will have the respect of the prosecution, defense, and more importantly the jury.

Based on my experience with Judge Kawamura, I urge you to please confirm her nomination.

Sincerely,

/s/ Allen Yadao

Allen Yadao



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
ADULT MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION  
OAHU COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER BRANCH  
FORENSIC SERVICES SECTION  
1700 LANAKILA AVENUE  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

In reply, please refer to:  
File

November 2, 2015

To Senator Gilbert SC Keith-Agaran, Chair, Senator Maile SL Shimabukuro, Vice Chair, and Members,  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Re: GM1- Shirley Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge

Dear Senators,


We are writing to you in support of Governor David Ige's nomination of District Court Judge Shirley Kawamura to the First Circuit Court. Our affiliation with Judge Kawamura is through our working relationship as the Jail Diversion Program, Community Mental Health. Throughout the years Judge Kawamura has provided us with not only her professional guidance as a member of the Advisory Board for the Oahu Jail Diversion Program since 2013, but also an advocate in reducing recidivism of misdemeanor and petty misdemeanor cases in promoting Jail Diversion as an alternate means to link to mental health services.

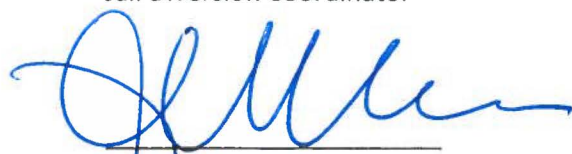
Judge Kawamura has always demonstrated an exceptional work ethic and professionalism, in her demeanor and in court decisions, and she is well-respected in the mental health field. Judge Kawamura collaborates daily with our Court Based Clinician in ensuring mental health issues are being addressed with the criminal justice system.

This is an appropriate nomination and one well deserving for Judge Kawamura. We have the utmost respect for her commitment and dedication of her work and we strongly ask for the appointment of Honorable Judge Shirley Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge

Best Regards,

  
Louis R. Castro Jr. (Kainoa)  
Jail Diversion Coordinator

  
Dr. Brenda Bauer-Smith  
Court Based Clinician-District Court

  
Dr. Don "Keith" Pedro  
Forensic Section Head, Oahu Branch

November 1, 2015

On-line Testimony Submittal

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice-Chair  
Committee Members  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hawaii State Legislature

Re: First Circuit Court Nominee Shirley Kawamura (GM1)

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair Shimabukuro and Honorable Committee Members:

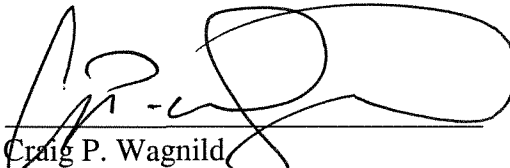
I am writing in support of Senate Measure GM1 to confirm the Governor's nominee Shirley Kawamura to a ten year term as a judge in the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. Judge Kawamura, who currently sits as a District Court judge has spent nearly half of her last two years as a replacement judge in Circuit Court for other judges who have been moved to new positions. She is, and has been quite obviously recognized by the Hawaii State Judiciary and her fellow judges, highly qualified for this position. Unlike many who have been elevated to the position of Circuit Court judge, Judge Kawamura has many years of professional experience practicing both civil law and criminal law. She grew up in Hawaii and has her roots firmly planted our state and her community. You could not do better than to have her serving as a Circuit Court judge and I urge you to confirm her nomination.

Thank you for your time, service, and your consideration of my testimony. Aloha.

Best regards,

BAYS LUNG ROSE & HOLMA

By:

  
Craig P. Wagnild  
Attorney at Law, A Law Corporation  
Its General Partner



## Adult Friends for Youth

3375 Koapaka Street, Suite B290 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96819 • (808) 833-8775 • FAX: (808) 833-6469  
E-mail: [afy@afyhawaii.com](mailto:afy@afyhawaii.com) • Web Page: <http://www.afyhawaii.com>

**PRESIDENT AND  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER**

*Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun, M.S.W.*

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*Sidney M. Rosen, M.S.W., Ph.D*

*\*Past Chair of the Board*

Testimony on GM 1  
Relating to Nomination of Shirley Kawamura  
Submitted to  
Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Submitted by  
Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun  
Adult Friends for Youth, President and CEO

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair Shimabukuro and members of the committee, I would like to submit by testimony in full support of Ms. Shirley Kawamura's nomination to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. For the past six years I have had the pleasure of knowing Ms. Kawamura through her husband Jason, who serves on Adult Friends for Youth (AFY) Board of Directors as Treasurer. In those six years, I have witnessed Ms. Kawamura's strong family values as a loving mother of two children who always supports their educational and athletic endeavors. Her values of commitment to family has also been demonstrated by her support for her husband's dedication to AFY's mission as he serves tirelessly as a Board member. Despite her very busy work schedule and family commitments she does not waiver to help support AFY through her husband's efforts thus demonstrating her commitment to making Hawaii a safe and prosperous place to live for the residents of Hawaii. Both her and her husband are involved in the Hawaiian culture through dance and language further demonstrating her commitment to the lovely State of Hawaii for which she is grateful to have been born and raised.

I ask for your serious consideration and confirmation of Ms. Shirley Kawamura to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii as nominated by the Honorable David Y. Ige, Governor of the State of Hawaii. Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony.



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
ADULT MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION  
OAHU COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER BRANCH  
FORENSIC SERVICES SECTION  
1700 LANAKILA AVENUE  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

In reply, please refer to:  
File

November 2, 2015

To Senator Gilbert SC Keith-Agaran, Chair, Senator Maile SL Shimabukuro, Vice Chair, and Members,  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Re: GM1- Shirley Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge

Dear Senators,


We are writing to you in support of Governor David Ige's nomination of District Court Judge Shirley Kawamura to the First Circuit Court. Our affiliation with Judge Kawamura is through our working relationship as the Jail Diversion Program, Community Mental Health. Throughout the years Judge Kawamura has provided us with not only her professional guidance as a member of the Advisory Board for the Oahu Jail Diversion Program since 2013, but also an advocate in reducing recidivism of misdemeanor and petty misdemeanor cases in promoting Jail Diversion as an alternate means to link to mental health services.

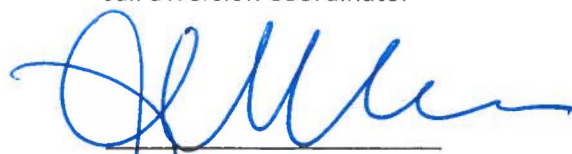
Judge Kawamura has always demonstrated an exceptional work ethic and professionalism, in her demeanor and in court decisions, and she is well-respected in the mental health field. Judge Kawamura collaborates daily with our Court Based Clinician in ensuring mental health issues are being addressed with the criminal justice system.

This is an appropriate nomination and one well deserving for Judge Kawamura. We have the utmost respect for her commitment and dedication of her work and we strongly ask for the appointment of Honorable Judge Shirley Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge

Best Regards,

  
Louis R. Castro Jr. (Kainoa)  
Jail Diversion Coordinator

  
Dr. Brenda Bauer-Smith  
Court Based Clinician-District Court

  
Dr. Don "Keith" Pedro  
Forensic Section Head, Oahu Branch

"Bambi" Eden Elizabeth Hifo

1377 Akiahala Street

Kailua, Hawaii 96734

October 31, 2015

The Honorable Gilbert Keith-Agaran  
Chair, Senate Judiciary & Labor Committee  
Hawaii State Legislature  
State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re:

Testimony in Support of Shirley Kawamura confirmation to First Circuit Court

Dear Senator Keith-Agaran and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the nomination of Shirley Kawamura to fill the current vacancy in the First Circuit Court. I have known her through her years of practice at the Public Defenders' Office and more recently when she has been a district court judge. On those later occasions each of us had a child in UH Manoa water polo clinic; her daughter, my son, and we had time to watch them and discuss topics about court and parenthood. I found her to be a well rounded, dedicated and intelligent person whose positive experience in district court will translate to the circuit court by being motivated to move cases along while paying attention to correct application of law and the importance of our jurors.

I respectfully urge your confirmation of Judge Kawamura to the circuit court bench. Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha,

/signature/  
Eden Elizabeth Hifo

Emily Kawashima Waters

ATTORNEY AT LAW L.L.L.C.

Topa Financial Center  
700 Bishop Street, Suite 1700  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TEL 808.744.4688  
FAX 888.777.5405  
EM ekw@kawashimawaters.com

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November 2, 2015

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

[JDCTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:JDCTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Re: GM1 – In Support of Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge

Dear Senators:

Please accept this letter in strong support of Judge Shirley M. Kawamura for her appointment to the Circuit Court bench in the First Circuit. I have known and worked with Judge Kawamura for the last 15 years and can confidently say that she is one of the most qualified individuals I can imagine for the vacancy.

I recently served on the Federal Judicial Selection Commission for the District of Hawaii and I had the privilege of reviewing the submissions and interviewing a number of exceptionally impressive and qualified candidates. I would include Judge Kawamura in that caliber of individuals. She has shown her dedication to public service and her credentials speak for themselves. I practice exclusively in Circuit Court and she would be a welcome addition to the bench. Candidates like Judge Kawamura are not common and I would urge the committee to appoint her.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Emily Kawashima Waters, Esq.



Cronin, Fried, Sekiya, Kekina & Fairbanks  
*Attorneys at Law, A Law Corporation*

Paul F. Cronin  
L. Richard Fried, Jr.  
Gerald Y. Sekiya  
Wayne K. Kekina  
David L. Fairbanks  
John D. Thomas, Jr.  
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Gregory L. Lui-Kwan  
Patrick F. McTernan  
Geoffrey K. S. Komeya  
Sylvia J. Luke  
Denise K. H. Kawatachi  
Howard G. McPherson  
Brian T. Toma  
Gregory Y. P. Tom  
Deborah A. Johnson

October 30, 2015

**Via Email: [JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)**

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hawai`i State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

**Re: GM 1 - Support for Confirmation of Shirley M. Kawamura  
to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai`i**

**Hearing: November 3, 2015  
Time: 9:00 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 325, State Capitol**

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair; Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair;  
and Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor:

I write in support for the confirmation of Shirley M. Kawamura to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai`i. I am an attorney licensed in Hawai`i since 1993, and had the privilege of working with Judge Kawamura while she was a civil litigator at my former law firm. As a civil litigator, Judge Kawamura's written work product and legal analysis were always thorough, meticulous, and well-reasoned. I have also known Judge Kawamura personally since 2005, and thus have observed her in both professional and personal settings. I can say without reservation that she would make an excellent Circuit Court Judge.

Throughout her legal career, Judge Kawamura has demonstrated increasing levels of legal abilities and commitment to our community. She possesses a superior range of knowledge and experience through her work as a public defender, civil/commercial litigator, per diem judge and, most recently, a State District Court Judge. In addition to administering cases, she devotes significant skill, time, and energy to improving our community through participation in such programs as the State

Senate Committee On Judiciary And Labor  
GM 1 – Support for Confirmation of Shirley M. Kawamura  
October 30, 2015  
Page 2

DWI Court Program which was established in 2013 to reduce recidivism rates among program participants and, thereby, improve public safety.

Significantly, Judge Kawamura has already demonstrated her ability to fulfill the requirements of a Circuit Court Judge. Since early last year, she has been assigned as a criminal judge in the Circuit Court of the First Circuit in addition to her duties as a State District Court Judge. As a Circuit Court Judge, she has presided over felony criminal jury trials; conducted hearings on substantive and procedural motions; adjudicated legal issues; managed the court calendar and staff; and fully met the demands of that position. Her confirmation as a Circuit Court Judge now would allow her to continue to serve and enhance the Judiciary.

On a personal level, Judge Kawamura is a dedicated and loving spouse and mother. Having a successful legal career as well as a fulfilling family life speaks volumes to the quality of her character.

In my professional and personal dealings with Judge Kawamura, she has always exhibited the utmost professionalism, fairness, and integrity. I fully support her confirmation as a Circuit Court Judge.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Y. P. Tom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gregory Y. P. Tom

# JAMES KAWASHIMA ALC

Sender's Information:  
Direct: (808) 275-0304  
E-mail: [jk@jkalc.com](mailto:jk@jkalc.com)

October 30, 2015

VIA E-MAIL: [JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Re: GM1 - Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge - IN SUPPORT  
Hearing Date and Time: November 3, 2015; 9:00 a.m.

Dear Senator Keith-Agaran, Senator Shimabukuro and Members of the State Committee on Judiciary and Labor:

PRE-2012:

I was an active attorney practicing as a partner in the firm of Kawashima Lorusso, LLP, and formerly a partner in the firms of Kobayashi Koshiba Watanabe & Kawashima and Watanabe Ing & Kawashima. I was first licensed to practice in the State of Hawaii in 1972 and have represented many different clients as a civil litigator and have tried well over 50 cases to jury verdict as first chair in courts of unlimited jurisdiction, in both State and Federal Courts.

I first came to know Ms. Kawamura as a student at Iolani School, where she excelled as a student and as an athlete, a rare combination these days. I lost track of her as she matriculated to Brown University after which she earned her Juris Doctor degree at Stanford University Law School in Palo Alto, California.

While she worked for our law firm, Ms. Kawamura worked extensively and almost exclusively with me on large cases, and although the firm's practice has been to have a younger partner assisting us on a particular trial team, Ms. Kawamura's maturity, skills and intelligence has allowed us to forego involving another partner.

Ms. Kawamura's background in both the private and public sectors, but always in litigation-related positions and the many criminal jury trials that she has experienced, will all serve her well in becoming an outstanding jurist. Nonetheless, it is Ms. Kawamura's sincerity, compassion and people skills that distinguish her from almost all other candidates.

October 30, 2015

Page 2

I provide this information having worked with literally hundreds of associates in the past many years that I have practiced, but also as a former member of the Judicial Selection Commission from 1997 to 2003 as one of the HSBA-elected commissioners.

Her resume speaks for itself in terms of her legal and trial experience so I will now speak to her legal ability. In the course of almost 40 years of active practice, I have worked with, and observed many, many young attorneys, some of whom I have work directly and closely with, the total number of those young people being perhaps in the hundreds and I can say with confidence that Ms. Kawamura was and is singularly the best young attorney with whom I have worked.

I am sending you this message of support and providing my candid opinions regarding the nominee, and wish her the best in her quest to become a Circuit Judge, but it is also with mixed emotions that I present this information as our law firm will lose a much valued and respected colleague. Our loss will be the State of Hawaii's gain.

I would expect Ms. Kawamura to be an exemplary jurist, especially in the courts that she has chosen to serve. I believe that she knows that she is qualified to be a candidate for the Circuit Court, but she chose to serve at the lowest level, District Court, because she understands that the great majority of our society who have any contact with the legal system would have that contact take place in the District Court. In that sense, it is the most important court in our system. I am certain that she is mature enough to handle any difficult situation and I would not imagine that she would lose her composure under any circumstances.

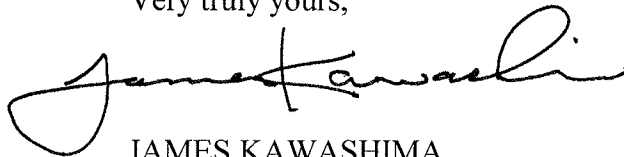
#### POST-2012

The information provided above was provided in 2012 when Ms. Kawamura was an appointee to the District Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. She has served honorably and admirably in that capacity for the past three years.

In fact, much of her time in the past year has been spent as a temporary Circuit Judge, filling in for vacancies that were created beyond her control. She has already proved that she can be a very effective Circuit Judge as she has handled all of the duties and responsibilities of that position.

I provide these opinions based on my years of practicing in the courts of this state for the past 40 years and having appeared before almost every judge that is presenting sitting. I close by thanking you for allowing me this opportunity to provide you with my thoughts about this nominee.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Kawashima". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "K".

JAMES KAWASHIMA

**From:** [Jeff Hawk](#)  
**To:** [JDLTestimony](#)  
**Subject:** GM1-S. KAWAMURA FOR FIRST CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE  
**Date:** Thursday, October 29, 2015 2:50:23 PM

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October 29, 2015

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair

Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Members Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

RE: GM1 –Shirley Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge–In Support November 3, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.

Dear Senators:

I am writing to you to voice my strong support for Shirley Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge. She is intelligent, hard working and honest.

I have known Ms. Kawamura since we started working together at the Office of the Public Defender. While we worked together, I saw first hand her superior legal abilities. At the same time, she always treated everyone she came across with fairness and civility.

It is my firm belief that the Judiciary and the State of Hawaii would be lucky to have Ms. Kawamura as a Circuit Court Judge.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Hawk

**Mr. Jeffrey A. Hawk, Esq.**

**The Law Offices of Hawk Sing & Ignacio**

1130 N. Nimitz Highway, Suite B-299

Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone: 808-532-3800

Jeffrey Ng  
1285 Malawaina Street  
Hilo, HI 96720

November 2, 2015

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815  
via email [JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)

**Re: Letter in Strong Support of Shirley M. Kawamura to Serve as  
Judge to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit  
GM1- Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge**

Dear Senator Keith-Agaran, Senator Shimabukuro, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor:

I am submitting this letter in STRONG SUPPORT of Shirley M. Kawamura to serve as a Judge to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. I have known Ms. Kawamura for about thirteen years and for about two years we worked together at the Office of the Public Defender in Honolulu.

Ms. Kawamura is an excellent trial attorney and was a tremendous resource for the younger deputy public defenders. She was a great influence who would always help with advice and guidance on our cases. She was a terrific resource and we learned a great deal from her. It was a huge loss to our office when she entered private practice.

As a deputy public defender for the past thirteen years, I have appeared before numerous District Court and Circuit Court judges in Honolulu and Hilo. Based upon my experience, I strongly believe that Ms. Kawamura possesses the intelligence, knowledge, character, and other necessary qualifications to excel as a Circuit Court judge. I am confident that she will be an excellent addition to the Circuit Court bench.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Jeffrey Ng

**Jennifer D.K. Ng, Esq.**

c/o 101 Aupuni Street Suite 325  
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

November 2, 2015

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815  
via email [JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)

**Re: GM 1  
SHIRLEY M. KAWAMURA, Gubernatorial Nominee for the Circuit Court of  
the First Circuit, State of Hawaii  
Hearing on Tuesday, November 3, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.**

Dear Senator Keith-Agaran, Senator Shimabukuro and Committee Members:

I am writing in support of SHIRLEY M. KAWAMURA's nomination for judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. I have known Ms. Kawamura as a colleague and friend since 2001. I can say with all confidence that Ms. Kawamura has the intellect, character, and temperament necessary to be a valuable member of the bench.

As an attorney and now district court judge, Ms. Kawamura is the consummate professional. While at the Office of the Public Defender, Ms. Kawamura excelled in the courtroom, defending indigent defendants against serious criminal charges with skill and compassion. As a district court judge, I have similarly observed Ms. Kawamura to be efficient and thoughtful even while managing a very busy court calendar.

I believe that it is critical for any judge to be respectful to all who appear before him or her, regardless of a person's socioeconomic status, the crime alleged to have committed, or the type of lawsuit involved. With this in mind, I am certain that Ms. Kawamura can be trusted with the burdensome obligation to handle all litigants from our community with the proper balance of respect and compassion while making decisions in accordance with the law.

It is without reservation or hesitation that I offer this letter in support of Ms. Kawamura's nomination for judge of the First Circuit Court. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Jennifer D.K. Ng

**JOHN M. TONAKI**  
STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**DEFENDER COUNCIL**  
1130 NORTH NIMITZ HIGHWAY  
SUITE A-254  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

**HONOLULU OFFICE**  
1130 NORTH NIMITZ HIGHWAY  
SUITE A-254  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

**APPEALS SECTION**  
TEL. No. 586-2080

**DISTRICT COURT SECTION**  
TEL. No. 586-2100

**FAMILY COURT SECTION**  
TEL. No. 586-2300

**FELONY SECTION**  
TEL. No. 586-2200

**FAX (808) 586-2222**



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**DEAN M. YAMASHIRO**  
CHIEF DEPUTY

**HILO OFFICE**  
275 PONAHAHAWA STREET  
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TEL. No. 974-4571  
FAX No. 974-4574

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82-6127 MAMALAHOA HIGHWAY  
P.O. BOX 1219  
CAPTAIN COOK, HAWAII 96704  
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FAX No. 323-7565

**KAUAI OFFICE**  
3060 EIWA STREET  
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TEL. No. 274-3418  
FAX No. 274-3422

**MAUI OFFICE**  
81 N. MARKET STREET  
WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793  
TEL. No. 984-5018  
FAX No. 984-5022

November 2, 2015

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

RE: Appointment of Shirley Kawamura to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii

Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor,

I am writing in support of Shirley Kawamura for selection to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. She has the qualities that would make her an excellent addition to the Hawaii judiciary. As a District Court judge, she has the ability to quickly identify the legal issues and come to a fair decision in each case that she presides. As a fellow Deputy Public Defender, she worked hard for her clients and conducted many difficult trials with enthusiasm. I believe Shirley Kawamura would make him an excellent addition to the Hawaii Circuit Court.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Jerry A. Villanueva  
Supervising Attorney  
District Court Division  
Office of the Public Defender



**Testimony of John M. Tonaki,  
State Public Defender to the Senate Committee on Judiciary  
and Labor**

November 3, 2015

GM1: Nomination of Shirley M. Kawamura to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit

Chair Keith-Agaran and Committee Members:

It is a privilege for me to support Shirley M. Kawamura's nomination to be a judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. I have known Shirley for close to 20 years since she served as a law clerk to the Honorable Dexter Del Rosario of the First Circuit Court. Shirley is truly an exceptional candidate for the Circuit Court bench. She possesses a wealth of experience in both civil and criminal cases.

Between 1999 and 2005, she served with distinction as a Deputy Public Defender. During this period, she was a tireless advocate for those charged with criminal offenses. She tried both jury-waived and jury trial cases in the Family, District and Circuit courts. She also handled cases on appeal to both the Supreme Court of Hawai'i and the Intermediate Court of Appeals. By the time that Shirley submitted her resignation to the office in 2005 to accept a position at the law firm of Kawashima, Lorusso, LLP., she had risen to the position of Deputy Public Defender IV handling serious felony cases.

As a Deputy Public Defender, Shirley stood out for her commitment to hard work, her willingness to assist others in the office with their cases and the academic quality of her submittals to the court. She always demonstrated compassion for the indigent clients we serve and was a tireless advocate for justice on behalf of every person she represented. Even while in the private practice of law, Shirley demonstrated her commitment to the cause of indigent defense by serving as a gubernatorial appointee to the Defender Council, the governing body of the Office of the Public Defender.

Since her appointment to the District Court of the First Circuit, Shirley has demonstrated her exceptional qualities as a judge by adjudicating cases with efficiency, compassion, and scholarship. While she can be demanding of the attorneys who appear before her, she has a good understanding of the difficulty of representing a client in litigation. She always listens and considers carefully the arguments of all parties and constantly demonstrates compassion for the aggrieved persons and defendants who are experiencing life difficulties.

Shirley's knowledge of the law and ability to issue rulings in a cogent, thorough and legally sound manner is without equal in the District Court. She has performed her judicial duties efficiently and with a deep commitment to justice.

I enthusiastically support the nomination of Shirley Kawamura to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on this matter.

October 29, 2015

Via email – [JDLEstimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:JDLEstimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: GM1 – Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge  
Hearing: November 3, 2015, 9:00 a.m. in Conference Room 325

Dear Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Shimabukuro and Members of the Committee:

I would like to wholeheartedly express my support for the appointment of Shirley Kawamura to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

I have known Shirley for over ten years. I have found her to be a highly competent litigator. She possesses all of the analytical and litigation skills which will provide an extensive knowledge base to serve as an effective judge. In addition to her legal skills, she also approaches problems and issues with common sense. This attribute will allow her to make determinations, not in a theoretical vacuum, but with a balance of real life considerations.

Finally, and most importantly, Shirley is a person of the highest integrity. There is no question that she will be judicially independent and arrive at what she believes to be the right decision.

Thank you for allowing me to share my support.

Very truly yours,



John T. Komeiji  
Senior Vice President and General Counsel

**From:** [Wong](#)  
**To:** [JDLTestimony](#)  
**Subject:** testimony re S. Kawamura  
**Date:** Monday, November 02, 2015 2:12:12 PM

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November 2, 2015

Testimony in support of Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge

GM1, November 3, 2015, 9:00am

Aloha Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor.

I urge you to confirm Shirley M. Kawamura to be First Circuit Court Judge.

I have been friends with Shirley for over 20 years. We met in college and were housemates our senior year. We have remained friends since. I have always known Shirley to be honest, diligent, and extremely intelligent, and hardworking. She is dedicated to public service and the pursuit of justice. I wholeheartedly support the confirmation of Shirley Kawamura for First Circuit Judge.

Sincerely,

Kerri Wong

October 30, 2015

Chair Keith-Agaran  
Vice-Chair Shimabukuro  
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor

RE: GM 1 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Circuit Court for the First Circuit, State of Hawaii, Gubernatorial Nominee SHIRLEY KAWAMURA, for a term to expire in ten years.

Testimony in SUPPORT

I have had the honor and the pleasure of practicing in front of the Honorable Shirley Kawamura in the District Court of the First Circuit when I had my private practice as a criminal defense attorney. Ms. Kawamura has always been a thoughtful and respectful Judge. She has always treated my clients and myself with respect and has showed judicial restraint at times when a few clients have had less than banner days coming up from cellblock.

One of the most important qualities I have found and respect in Ms. Kawamura is the amount of work she puts into each case. She is thoroughly prepared and thus is able to efficiently move the daily calendar. Attorneys have learned that if they are going into her courtroom, they must be fully prepared and on time. However, she is also aware of time conflicts with government/criminal defense attorneys being assigned to multiple courtrooms at the District Court level and is flexible, within reason, as long as her court is informed as to the attorney's whereabouts.

Honorable Kawamura's abilities as a Judge extends beyond the criminal court, however, and I have seen her negotiate settlements in the civil arena as well. She is masterful in her ability to move parties who are polarized and bring them together. In many instances, she is the voice of reason or, sometimes she is the voice of alternatives. I like the fact that the Honorable Kawamura is well rounded and can see the forest for the trees, will immediately zero in on the issues, and get right down to business.

Honorable Shirley Kawamura will be an excellent addition to the Circuit Court and I strongly encourage her confirmation. The amount of preparation she puts into each case, her ability to work with attorneys and to move her calendar, she will be an asset to the Court and she will be a wonderful Judge to the division to which she will be assigned.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT

Laura Yoshida, Esq.  
Bar #6770

October 30, 2015

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 221  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

RE: Testimony IN SUPPORT of GM1—Shirley M. Kawamura for First  
Circuit Court Judge

Dear Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Shimabukuro and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong support of the nomination of the Honorable Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge.

As the Driving While Impaired (DWI) Court Coordinator, I have had the privilege of working with Judge Kawamura in her capacity as a District Court Judge for the past five years. I have been able to observe first hand her excellent leadership qualities and composed judicial temperament. In the treatment court setting judicial leadership and demeanor are of the utmost importance. When Judge Kawamura interacts with our participants in court she is able to engage them in the program and whether she is providing them with encouragement or imposing sanctions treats everyone fairly and with respect.

In addition to her experience on the bench, Judge Kawamura also possesses a broad criminal and civil legal experience in both the public and private sectors. Her professional experience and commitment to public service together with her personal qualities of integrity and honesty make her an exemplary nominee for Circuit Court Judge.

Accordingly, I strongly support Judge Kawamura's nomination without reservation. I know that Judge Kawamura would undoubtedly make a meaningful contribution to our community as a Circuit Court Judge.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa T.K.O. Lum



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
ADULT MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION  
OAHU COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER BRANCH  
FORENSIC SERVICES SECTION  
1700 LANAKILA AVENUE  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

In reply, please refer to:  
File

November 2, 2015

To Senator Gilbert SC Keith-Agaran, Chair, Senator Maile SL Shimabukuro, Vice Chair, and Members,  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Re: GM1- Shirley Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge

Dear Senators,


We are writing to you in support of Governor David Ige's nomination of District Court Judge Shirley Kawamura to the First Circuit Court. Our affiliation with Judge Kawamura is through our working relationship as the Jail Diversion Program, Community Mental Health. Throughout the years Judge Kawamura has provided us with not only her professional guidance as a member of the Advisory Board for the Oahu Jail Diversion Program since 2013, but also an advocate in reducing recidivism of misdemeanor and petty misdemeanor cases in promoting Jail Diversion as an alternate means to link to mental health services.

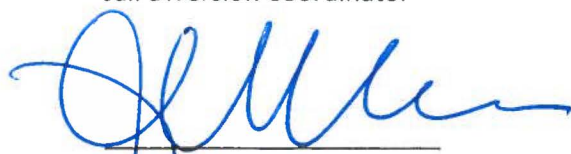
Judge Kawamura has always demonstrated an exceptional work ethic and professionalism, in her demeanor and in court decisions, and she is well-respected in the mental health field. Judge Kawamura collaborates daily with our Court Based Clinician in ensuring mental health issues are being addressed with the criminal justice system.

This is an appropriate nomination and one well deserving for Judge Kawamura. We have the utmost respect for her commitment and dedication of her work and we strongly ask for the appointment of Honorable Judge Shirley Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge

Best Regards,

  
Louis R. Castro Jr. (Kainoa)  
Jail Diversion Coordinator

  
Dr. Brenda Bauer-Smith  
Court Based Clinician-District Court

  
Dr. Don "Keith" Pedro  
Forensic Section Head, Oahu Branch

(GM1, Hearing on November 3, 2015, 9:00AM)

October 29, 2015

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
And Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

**Re: GM-1 Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge – Testimony In Support**

The Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members:

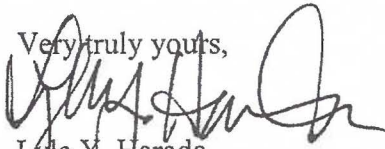
Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments concerning Judge Shirley Kawamura, the nominee for the First Circuit Court Judicial position. Judge Kawamura will be an outstanding addition to the First Circuit Court. She is bright, capable, hard working, devoted to Hawaii, and has the necessary background and experience.

I first met Judge Kawamura 10 years ago, when she was an associate lawyer at a civil litigation firm. She had previously graduated from Stanford Law School, and had worked for 6 years as a public defender, trying a large number of cases, including felony murders. She was thorough, a quick thinker, and an excellent communicator, using stories and insights from her own life. Most importantly, her word was always good. She was as well respected by her opponents as she was by all those with whom she worked.

Though Judge Kawamura received her college and graduate education from elite schools on the mainland, she has never lost her connection and commitment to Hawaii, and she remains humble and “down to earth”. The second child of parents originally from Japan, she was raised by a strict, but very loving father. Honesty, honor, education, and hard work were the rules that shaped her life. Judge Kawamura now has a family of her own and the joys, sorrows, and lessons of parenthood are hers as well.

Judge Kawamura will make an excellent Circuit Court Judge. She has played an important role with the Special Courts created to deal with mental health issues, jail diversion, and addiction. And she will continue to look for innovative ways to keep our judiciary strong and to serve our community. I support her confirmation. Thank you again for allowing me to provide these comments.

Very truly yours,



Lyle Y. Harada  
1022 Bethel Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
**To:** [JDLTestimony](#)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for GM1 on Nov 3, 2015 09:00AM  
**Date:** Friday, October 30, 2015 1:27:23 PM

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**GM1**

Submitted on: 10/30/2015

Testimony for on Nov 3, 2015 09:00AM in Conference Room 325

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Malia Day	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Honorable Senate Committee, I submit this testimony in support of Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge. Ms. Kawamura is a demonstrated and committed community servant. I feel she has the experience, temperament, integrity, heart and work ethic to be an excellent and just Circuit Court Judge, where she can truly make a difference in the lives of the people of Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted, Malia Day

Please note that testimony submitted ~~less than 24 hours prior to the hearing,~~ improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email [webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)



*Law Offices of  
LESLIE R. KOP\*  
1100 Ward Avenue, Suite 500  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814*

*Adrian Y. Chang  
Randall Y. Kaya  
Laurie E. Keeno  
Telephone: (808) 527-7736*

*Leslie R. Kop  
Michael A. Lorusso  
Brenda E. Morris  
Facsimile: (808) 527-7102*

October 31, 2015

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee On Judiciary and Labor

RE: GM1 – Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge  
Testimony In Support  
GM1, November 3, 2015, 9:00 a.m.

Dear Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair, Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee On Judiciary and Labor:

Thank you for this opportunity to express my unqualified support on behalf of the Honorable Shirley M. Kawamura for her nomination as a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit. I had the honor and privilege of working with Judge Kawamura at my former law firm, Kawashima Lorusso, LLP. Without question, Judge Kawamura meets and in many instances exceeds all of the criteria utilized in reviewing judicial nominees. Judge Kawamura's educational background is second to none and she has given of herself both in the private and public sectors.

Judge Kawamura is an exceptional attorney and jurist. She works many long hours, all while balancing her responsibilities as a caring mother to her young children. While with my former firm, she handled a wide variety of matters from relatively straight forward tort cases to multi-party, complex litigation matters and produced excellent, well-reasoned work products in all instances. She is well-respected by both sides of the bar and often she received many compliments as to her work product from opposing counsel in the midst of litigation. Judge Kawamura is very knowledgeable as to all aspects of the law having handled civil matters in private practice and criminal matters with the Office of the Public Defender. She has continued to excel in her abilities first as a Per Diem District Court Judge and in her present position as a District Court Judge.

In addition to her tireless energy, she approached each day with good humor and was appreciated not only by her clients and the attorneys in my firm but also by the staff. She treats all those who appear before her with respect and has excellent judicial demeanor.

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee On Judiciary and Labor  
October 31, 2015  
Page 2

Thank you again for this opportunity as I strongly support Judge Kawamura's nomination as she would be an excellent addition to the Circuit Court.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. A. Lorusso', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael A. Lorusso

MAL:sem

November 2, 2015

Via JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Re: **IN SUPPORT**  
**GM1 - Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court**  
**Judge; November 3, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.**

Dear Senators Keith-Agaran, Shimabukuro and Members:

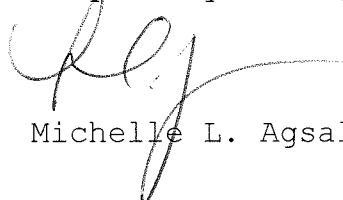
My name is Michelle L. Agsalda and I am an attorney who served in government and private practice for the past 15 years. I write in strong support of the appointment of Shirley Kawamura to the Circuit Court bench, as a First Circuit Court Judge. I have known Ms. Kawamura for 17 years, both as a colleague and personal friend.

On a professional level, Ms. Kawamura is an intelligent, hard-working and capable judge, which gained the respect of her peers and colleagues. Her exceptional trial skills, understanding of the law, experience and dedication would be a great asset to the circuit court bench. As a district court judge, she has demonstrated judicial professionalism at the highest level. She has effective communication skills, efficient court management, exceptional insight and analytic skills and has great respect for all individuals who serve in and are served by the judicial system.

On a personal level, I am honored and privileged to call Ms. Kawamura a friend. She is a very caring and loving person. As a mother, Ms. Kawamura manages to juggle the demands of being a full-time judge and a full-time parent with great success. The legal skills, professionalism and compassion that Ms. Kawamura possesses will allow her to be a proficient, skilled and respected Circuit Court Judge.

Without hesitation, I strongly recommend her for the position. She will be a wonderful addition to the Circuit Court bench. Should you need to contact me, please call me at (808)585-0920.

Very Truly Yours,



Michelle L. Agsalda, Esq.

**From:** [Paul Cunney](#)  
**To:** [JDL Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** GM 1 Shirley M.Kawamura nominee First Circuit Court Judgeship SUPPORT Tuesday November 3, 2015 @ 9 a.m.  
**Date:** Friday, October 30, 2015 7:22:10 PM

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Senator Gilbert S.C.Keith-Agaran Chairman of Senate Judiciary Committee and Senator Maile Shimabukuro, Vice Chairman of Senate Judiciary Committee

As a practicing attorney for 42 years, I have appeared before over a hundred judges. I have personally witnessed Judge Kawamura's rise from the public defender's office to a judgeship in the District Court of the First Circuit and now sitting on and off in the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. The toughest job in the entire Judiciary of the State of Hawaii is being a Judge in the Criminal Division in the First Circuit. You are front and center, overseeing high profile, newsworthy criminal jury trials, while being responsible for knowing the law and the rules of evidence. You gotta know your "stuff". Judge Shirley M.Kawamura has prepared herself for this nomination. She has worked in the trenches as a deputy public defender before being elevated to the Judiciary. She is akamai as to how the legal system operates. She will be respected by both the Prosecutor's office and the Defense bar. She will make an excellent jurist because she knows her "stuff". I commend Governor Ige for his selection of Judge Shirley M.Kawamura. I support her nomination without reservation and believe Judge Shirley M. Kawamura will serve with distinction.

Respectfully submitted,  
Attorney Paul J. Cunney # 3145

Sent from my iPhone

# YAMAMOTO KIM LLP

A Limited Liability Law Partnership

Sender's Information:  
Direct: (808) 275-0325  
E-mail: [ryamamoto@yklp.net](mailto:ryamamoto@yklp.net)

October 29, 2015

**VIA E-MAIL: [JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:JDLTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)**

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Members  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**Re: GM1 - Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge – In Support**  
(GM1, November 3, 2015, 9:00 a.m.)

The undersigned Randall Y. Yamamoto supports the appointment of Shirley M. Kawamura for the position of Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii, and welcomes the opportunity to have input into this process.

Shirley M. Kawamura had worked with me at our previous firm of Kawashima Lorusso, LLP, starting near the end of 2005. She was a substantial contributor and compassionate advocate, working tirelessly as she took immense pride in her work and work product. She was very efficient and productive and brought an apparent limitless amount of energy and focus to every case and client. This had not gone unnoticed nor unappreciated by our clients as well, as they were very quick to praise her conscientiousness. She was a true asset to our firm but more importantly a respected colleague. It has been a true pleasure working with her and witnessing her progress as an attorney and as a person.

Her credentials of course are impeccable, and her resume and educational background reveal the dedication and commitment to excellence that she always strives for in her life and in her practice. If she has a fault, perhaps it is that she always works toward perfection and “just getting it right”. But the most important traits that she brings to our profession is her compassion and her desire to give back to the community. That may sound like a cliché but it is Shirley, as demonstrated and proven by her life choices.

She began her legal training by interning with the Legal Aid Society and then with the Office of the Public Defender. Upon graduation from the Stanford Law Center in 1997, she then clerked for one year with Judge Dexter D. Del Rosario. Though she worked with a prominent Hawaii law firm early in her career, she again felt the calling to do more for her community and for the People of Hawaii. So though she enjoyed working with that firm (and more importantly with the people in that firm), her innate desire and compassion to represent her community took her back to the Office of Public Defender, where she worked and tried cases for over six years.

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Sénator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Members  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
October 29, 2015  
Page 2

Those six years of course gave her the background in criminal litigation. But at that point, luckily for my former firm, she wanted to hone her skills in civil litigation.

While working with her, it was clear that she was extremely diligent and eager to learn. Throughout her practice in civil litigation, she demonstrated her knowledge and ability to grasp difficult concepts and to quickly analyze some complex issues. She was professional and courteous but tenacious as well, especially when she believed she was right.

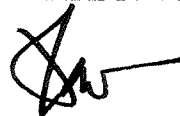
But due to her constant desire to serve the community, Shirley aspired to be a judge and thus initially served as a per diem judge, and then as a District Court Judge. She has no doubt proven her capability and ability. Clearly that is her true calling. She had worked hard to get to that point and to that level. Some might say that she was, and is, a bit too young and that there were more experienced applicants. But Shirley has practiced in all aspects of litigation - criminal and civil - and has served as a District Court Judge (as well as sitting in Circuit Court at times when called upon to do so); therefore, her qualifications and experience are exemplary. She has demonstrated her judicial temperament and handled the workload without complaint. Clearly, she relishes public service.

In my opinion, there are none more qualified and dedicated to fulfill the obligations and requirements of such an honor and position as a Circuit Court Judge for the State of Hawaii. Her compassion and desire to be fair and judicious would not allow her to do anything less. It is safe to say that she has clearly demonstrated that throughout her life and her career. Shirley is most definitely qualified for this appointment.

For these reasons, I strongly urge and wholeheartedly support Shirley M. Kawamura for appointment as a judge for the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

Very truly yours,

YAMAMOTO KIM LLP



RANDALL Y. YAMAMOTO

November 2, 2015

Senator Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chairperson  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: GM-1: Shirley M. Kawamura for Circuit Court of the First Circuit,  
– In Support

Dear Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members:

I am writing individually, and in my capacity as managing partner of Hawk Sing & Ignacio, to **support** the confirmation of Shirley Kawamura, Esq. for the vacant Circuit Court Judgeship.

We are a small law firm that has collectively practiced daily in the District, Family, and Circuit Courts for the past 12 years. Individually, each of our attorneys has practiced in these same courts for over 15 years. We are familiar with the histories, procedures, and personalities of the Courts of the First Circuit.

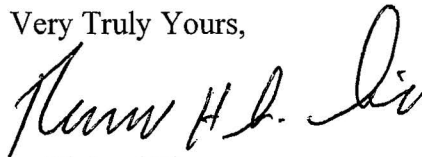
I am currently the chairperson of the Hawaii State Bar Association Section on Criminal Justice and Corrections, and the past president of the Hawaii Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

Ms. Kawamura is one of the brightest, quickest, and most competent attorneys that I have ever met. As a judge, she has proven to be practical, wise, and compassionate. She has impeccable academic credentials, as well as years of practical “in the trenches” experience as a deputy public defender, private practitioner, and as a District Court Judge in the First Circuit. Public service needs honest, talented, and caring individuals like Shirley Kawamura.

Outside of her professional life, Ms. Kawamura is a loving caring parent, who treats others with respect and fairness. She is levelheaded and compassionate. She possesses the best of the traits that we hope for ourselves. I trust her as a friend and colleague, and believe that our community needs and deserves Ms. Kawamura on the bench.

The opportunity to have such a qualified individual on the Circuit Court bench should not be passed up. Please feel free to call upon me if you have any questions or concerns.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard H. Sing". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Richard Sing  
Hawk Sing & Ignacio





ASHFORD + WRISTON  
A LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP

ROSEMARY T. FAZIO  
A Law Corporation  
Direct: (808) 539-0415  
rfazio@awlaw.com

October 30, 2015

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
GM1 – Confirmation of Shirley Kawamura

Dear Senators Keith-Agaran and Shimabukuro:


The purpose of this letter is to express my strong support for the confirmation to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii, gubernatorial nominee Shirley Kawamura.

Ms. Kawamura is very intelligent and has a phenomenal memory. She is a quick study and is able to grasp quickly the facts and law that are relevant to any given dispute. While Ms. Kawamura is always professional, she also has a sense of humor and an approachable demeanor. Perhaps the strongest quality that she possesses, though, in terms of qualifying her to be a judge, is her unfailing integrity. I worked with her when she was an associate attorney at my law firm. I never once had occasion to question her good judgment and her honesty.

There is another reason why Ms. Kawamura's nomination warrants your favorable consideration and confirmation. Ms. Kawamura has an extensive civil and criminal law background. This varied background and exposure to a wide variety of cases and clients will serve her well as a judge. The Judiciary would benefit greatly from the perspective of someone like Ms. Kawamura who has succeeded in differing legal environments. I respectfully urge favorable consideration of her application. Should you wish to discuss further Ms. Kawamura's candidacy, please do not hesitate to call me.

In summary, Ms. Kawamura would be a valuable member of the First Circuit Court. I respectfully urge your Committee to confirm her nomination. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process.

Very truly yours,

  
ROSEMARY T. FAZIO

1714828v1  
Post Office Box 111 / Honolulu, HI 96810

First Hawaiian Center / 909 Bishop Street, Suite 1100 / Honolulu, HI 96813  
T 808 539 0400 / F 808 539 3645 / E jatty@awlaw.com / www.ashfordandwriston.com

Testimony of Susan L. Arnett  
to the Senate Committee on Judiciary & Labor

November 3, 2015

RE: GM1. NOMINATION OF SHIRLEY M. KAWAMURA TO THE CIRCUIT  
COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT, STATE OF HAWAII

Senator Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee:

I write in strong support of the nomination of Shirley M. Kawamura as a Circuit Court Judge in the First Circuit Court.

I have known Miki since she was a law clerk. After she joined our office in 1999, I was both her colleague and supervisor. She proved to be very strong in trial practice and handled difficult trial cases at each of the levels she served as a Deputy Public Defender. In addition to her trial work, Miki volunteered to do oral argument before our appellate courts and was as outstanding in that as we knew her to be from her trial work.

As a supervisor, it is invaluable to have someone to whom you can give the most difficult cases, from hard to deal with clients to complex legal issues. Miki would always take on whatever specific challenge a case presented. She had an envious work ethic and was never unprepared. I regretted that she left our office but understood she wanted the new challenge of civil work. From visiting with her over the years since she left, it is clear that she has continued the same work ethic and put in the time and effort to understand and master both civil law and her time on the bench as a District Court judge.

Having served on the bench, she will not have the same 'learning curve' as others appointed to the Circuit Court. This is especially true because she has served in vacancies on the Circuit Court over the past few years. She has already presided over Circuit Court trials and has had experience in settlement conferences and substantive pre-trial motions. She is known to be prepared, informed and dedicated to doing the job well. She is the best kind of judge because she is always trying to learn more.

She will be an excellent Circuit Court judge. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this nomination.

**From:** [taryntomase](#)  
**To:** [JDLTestimony](#)  
**Subject:** GM1 – Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge  
**Date:** Sunday, November 01, 2015 8:19:07 PM

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Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair, Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair, and Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor:

This letter is in support of the nomination of the Honorable SHIRLEY M. KAWAMURA as Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit. I have known Judge Kawamura for the past sixteen years, and it is without hesitation that I submit this letter in support of her nomination. I believe that Judge Kawamura possesses the character, intellect, and professional experience that this challenging and rigorous position demands.

I worked with Judge Kawamura in the Office of the Public Defender for a number of years, and I also remained in contact with her while she engaged in her civil practice. During her career as a litigator, Judge Kawamura always demonstrated unparalleled legal knowledge and ability. She also practiced and exemplified the highest ethical standards and diligence.

During her tenure on the district court bench, Judge Kawamura has demonstrated that she possesses the integrity, judicial temperament and ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position. Judge Kawamura is highly experienced and well respected. She has consistently demonstrated that she possess the intellect and professional experience to be successful on the Circuit Court bench. Further, she has shown a commitment to public service both as a deputy public defender and also as a member of the Public Defender Council, where she generously donated her time and energy to the State of Hawaii.

Judge Kawamura possesses the highest moral character and demeanor as exemplified by her treatment of the attorneys, litigants, and court staff which is always done with dignity, respect, and compassion. These character traits are necessary in order to manage the cases and volume of individuals who appear in Circuit Court on a daily basis. Judge Kawamura will be an asset as a trial judge and also in facilitating plea negotiations and compromise with sensitivity and practicality.

As a citizen and a practicing attorney, I believe that the State of Hawaii deserves the best and most qualified judges. Circuit Court impacts a large number of people on a daily basis. Thus, the judicial applicant must be well rounded and adept to handle the broad range of legal issues, the vast numbers of cases, and have the judicial demeanor, character, legal expertise, and intellect. Not only is Judge Kawamura financially secure and physically able bodied, but based

on my knowledge and experience with her, it is apparent that Judge Kawamura has the skill and dedication to be an invaluable asset to the State of Hawaii as a Circuit Court Judge.

Thank you for taking my comments into consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Taryn Tomasa

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA**

John A. Burns School of Medicine

Department of Psychiatry

**October 30, 2015**

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hawaii State Capital  
417 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**RE: GM 1 – Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge**

Dear Chairman Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members:

I am submitting this written testimony in strong support for the confirmation of the Honorable Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge.

I am the case manager for the Driving While Impaired (DWI) Court, contracted through the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry. I had the privilege and honor to work with Judge Kawamura through the DWI Court, and travel with her to Washington D.C. for the National Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference this past July where we met with our State Representatives.

In my experience appearing before Judge Kawamura, she has demonstrated integrity, respect, and fairness while speaking with our program participants. During meetings for our specialty court, Judge Kawamura exemplified compassion, wisdom and dedication. And, while in Washington D.C., Judge Kawamura rallied awareness for Hawaii's Drug Court Programs and was visibly inspired by Hawaii's potential in the substance abuse recovery field.

I recommend Judge Kawamura for confirmation without hesitation and truly believe the people of Hawai'i will be well served with her as a Circuit Court Judge.

Very respectfully,



Tina Hamayasu  
Case Manager, DWI Court Project  
University of Hawaii,  
John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Department of Psychiatry  
677 Ala Moana Blvd, Suite 301  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

November 1, 2015

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Maile Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Re: Nomination of Shirley Kawamura to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit  
Hearing: November 3, 2015 9:00 a.m.

I write in strong support of Shirley Kawamura's nomination to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

Prior to her appointment as District Court Judge of the First Circuit, Shirley was a top-notch courtroom litigator. As a trial attorney, she was extraordinarily well versed in both civil and criminal law. It was universally believed that when she transitioned to the judiciary her legal skill set would serve the judiciary well. It has. Shirley Kawamura has distinguished herself as one of the finest judges in our state's District Court system.

I first met Judge Kawamura when she served as a judicial clerk to Judge Dexter Del Rosario. Later, I was fortunate to work with her when she joined the Office of the Public Defender as a deputy public defender. Whether as a young attorney learning the legal ropes, a civil litigator in complex cases, or as a District Court Judge seamlessly moving from calendar to calendar, she has always possessed a strong work ethic, a powerful intellect, and a passion for the Hawai'i judicial system. To District Court practitioners, Judge Kawamura is known for employing a balanced, common sense approach to decision-making. She issues reasoned rulings that are explained in a clear, structured style. Win or lose, the respective parties and attorneys exit her courtroom knowing that they received a fair hearing from a well-prepared, honest, open-minded judge.

Above all, Shirley is a good person. She has a solid marriage. She is a loving and inspirational Supermom to two exceptional children. She is a thoughtful, big-hearted person who is always supportive and encouraging to her many friends. In my view, there is no wiser choice for Governor Ige's first appointment to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit than Shirley Kawamura.

Sincerely,

/s/ Todd Eddins  
Todd Eddins

# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA

John A. Burns School of Medicine

Department of Psychiatry

**October 30, 2015**

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair,  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair,  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hawaii State Capital  
417 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

## **Regarding GM 1 – Shirley M. Kawamura for First Circuit Court Judge**

Dear Chairman Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor:

This testimony is submitted in unqualified support for the confirmation of the Honorable Shirley M. Kawamura, J.D., to the bench of the First Circuit Court.

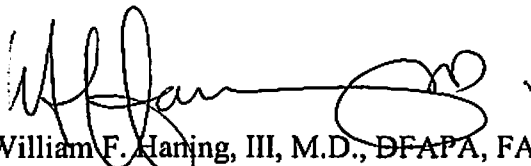
My association with Judge Kawamura is as the Principal Investigator for the Driving While Impaired (DWI) Court, administered within the 1<sup>st</sup> District Court. In the preceding two years she has taught me a great deal about how such a project can work; and, more importantly, on what the judge's role can be in such a setting. Please understand that this project is an innovation, and there are many uncharted regions in its development. Judge Kawamura's respect for the clients has been manifest in her even-handed handling of all her sensitivity to their needs, and her willingness to carefully, thoroughly examine all of the elements of each case when making decisions. I have wished for such teachers in medical school and a long career, but they have been rare.

I suspect that a great deal of Judge Kawamura's effectiveness lies in her humility. She has the experience of being a mother, and brings this experience to the management of alcohol use disorders as a family disease. It has resulted in compassion when directing the clients, and firmness when addressing the needs of the clients' families. Whenever I have queried a client as to his or her opinion of Judge Kawamura, the responses have indicated their trust in her.

You will receive endorsement under separate cover from my project Manager, Ms. Tina Hamayasu, MPA, further addressing our experience with the Judge here and in trainings. I share Ms. Hamayasu's high opinion of Judge Kawamura. In my trade, we commonly compliment a colleague by saying, "I would happily send my family members to him/her." I hope it will not seem flippant, as I do mean this sincerely; but were I or a family member to come before Judge Kawamura in the setting of the Circuit Court, I know that we would be confident in her intelligent and fair judgment.

I welcome any questions, and may be reached at [haning@hawaii.edu](mailto:haning@hawaii.edu), or mobile telephone 808-220-2685.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William F. Haring, III', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

William F. Haring, III, M.D., DFAPA, FASAM  
Professor and Associate Chair, Department of Psychiatry;  
and Director, M.D. Programs  
John A. Burns School of Medicine  
University of Hawai'i



DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



DOUGLAS S. CHIN  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
425 QUEEN STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
(808) 586-1500

RUSSELL A. SUZUKI  
FIRST DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

November 2, 2015

Attn: Senator Gilbert S. C. Keith-Agaran,  
Chair and Committee Members  
Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
State Capitol, Room 221  
415 Capitol, Room 221  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Keith-Agaran and Committee Members

The Department supports Governor Ige's nomination of Shirley Kawamura to serve as a circuit court judge in the first circuit.

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend Ms. Kawamura's nomination in person to share verbal remarks, but I had the pleasure of working across from gubernatorial nominee Shirley Kawamura when she was a deputy public defender and I was a county prosecutor. Ms. Kawamura was always prepared, professional, compassionate and sharp. She will serve the State of Hawai'i well in this new capacity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Chin".

Doug Chin

October 26, 2015



**FAX: 586-7348/U.S. MAIL**

The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 221  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **The Honorable Shirley M. Kawamura-First Circuit Court**

Dear Chairman Keith-Agaran:

I write this letter in strong support of the Honorable Shirley M. Kawamura's nomination to the First Circuit Court.

I am the President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers ("SHOPO"), which is the public sector union that represents all of our county police officers serving throughout the 50<sup>th</sup> State. As a police union, we are especially interested in the appointments to the judiciary since the end product of our investigations is often decided in the courtroom. In addition, our officers spend significant amounts of time interacting with the judges and testifying in their courtrooms.

Our review and evaluation of a nominee is based on several factors, including but not limited to a candidate's intelligence, legal knowledge and ability, professional experience, integrity, judicial temperament and diligence. We use our evaluations to determine whether we will support, oppose or remain neutral on a particular nominee. We take our evaluations and recommendations seriously, as we know that the position we take could negatively impact a candidate's nomination.

As for the nomination of Judge Kawamura, we voice our unequivocal and strong support for a nominee who we believe is well qualified and experienced to serve as our next First Circuit Court judge. As the largest public law enforcement labor organization in Hawaii, we support and endorse Judge Kawamura's nomination to this distinguished position. Our officers are called upon daily to testify in our Hawaii courts and have had a lot of experience appearing in Judge Kawamura's courtroom over the last several years. Based on our experiences, we can tell you that Judge Kawamura clearly possesses and displays a keen judicial intellect, shows the utmost respect for our officers who appear in her courtroom and is a judge who obviously works hard to get it right. She has an even handed approach, a well balanced and mature judicial temperament and exhibits compassion and understanding for those who come before her court in what are often very difficult and trying circumstances for individuals.

As police officers, we strive for the highest levels of integrity and ethics and take great comfort in knowing that Judge Kawamura is of a like mind and practice. Based on our observations, it is clear that Judge Kawamura's starting

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Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran


10/26/15

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point is one of fundamental fairness and an even playing field for all who come into her courtroom. Combining her sense of fairness with her legal mind, expansive legal knowledge and experience and a balanced judicial temperament makes her a strong nominee. Her educational credentials, including a BA from Brown University and a JD from Stanford University, combined with her experience serving as a District Court judge and substitute Circuit Court judge make her well qualified and experienced for this judicial promotion. She enjoys a well earned reputation for having a strong work ethic and is of impeccable character and integrity and is by all measures well prepared to take this next step in her judicial career.

We applaud Judge Kawamura's nomination and believe that she will do an outstanding job on the First Circuit Court bench. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this nomination and we sincerely hope Judge Kawamura will receive your committee's unanimous support.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tenari Ma'afala", written in a cursive style.

TENARI MA'AFALA  
SHOPO PRESIDENT



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

**SHIRLEY M. KAWAMURA**  
**Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit**

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
The Honorable Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Chair  
The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice-Chair

From: Gregory Markham  
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Tuesday, November 3, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 325  
State Capitol

The Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the nomination of Shirley M. Kawamura for the position of Circuit Court Judge, First Circuit.

On October 22, 2015, after learning that Governor David Ige had nominated Judge Kawamura to the Circuit Court bench, the HSBA began its judicial nomination review process. The HSBA membership was notified of the nomination and was asked to comment (see attachment).

Simultaneous to these actions, a Subcommittee of three (3) HSBA Board members was appointed and asked to review the comments received (identifying information is removed unless the attorney authorized disclosure); contact references provided by the nominee and others who have knowledge of the nominee's experience and qualifications; conduct follow-up member contact for clarification, if necessary; and review documentation provided by the nominee.

A Special HSBA Board meeting was held on October 30<sup>th</sup> to consider the judicial nomination of Judge Kawamura and to interview the nominee.

Prior to the October 30<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the HSBA Executive Director and I met with Judge Kawamura on October 29<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the HSBA nomination procedure and to apprise her of the Subcommittee's findings, and of any areas of concern that may be raised during the Special Board meeting.

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## TESTIMONY

Nomination of Shirley M. Kawamura

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On October 30, 2015, the HSBA Board met and reviewed documentation submitted by Judge Kawamura and information from all of the references provided by the nominee. Comments and letters received from HSBA members reflected a strong endorsement of Judge Kawamura in all categories of the HSBA criteria which includes:

- Integrity
- Diligence
- Legal knowledge and ability
- Professional experience
- Temperament
- Financial responsibility
- Public service
- Health
- Ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position

And after completion of questioning and dialog relating to her background, personal and professional experiences, and reasons for pursuing the position of Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit, the HSBA Board found Judge Kawamura to be **QUALIFIED**.

Judge Kawamura's background as a civil and criminal litigator and experience first as a per diem Family Judge and her subsequent appointment to the District Court bench bring a wealth of practical legal and judicial experience. She is known for efficiency in the management of her court calendar, legal acumen, thorough research and strong writing skills. Judge Kawamura's multiple temporary assignments to the Circuit Court bench add to her judicial experience and corroborate the HSBA Board's decision in finding Shirley M. Kawamura as **QUALIFIED**.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments for consideration during the deliberations and decision making of this Committee.