

Senator Karl Rhoads
Chairperson, Hawaii State Judiciary Committee
415 South Beretania Street, Room #204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Testimony in Support of Thomas Haia as a District Family Judge

Senator Rhoads,

My name is Courtney Haia. I am Thomas Haia's youngest daughter. I am writing in support of Thomas Haia as a District Family Judge.

My dad raised my two sisters and me, and our two younger brothers. He is the hardest worker, I watched as he worked full-time, while attending Law School. He managed to keep us busy with school, summer camps, and extra-curricular activities. He coached our soccer teams, taught classes at our middle school, attended our school activities, supported and encouraged us when we played high school and college sports. Education and achievement were stressed in our home and each of us was given the opportunity to attend out of state colleges. My dad is a man of intelligence, integrity and courage.

I am confident my dad will do everything in his power to effectively and efficiently support and encourage litigants that appear before him, as well as be fair and equitable in his decision-making. Dad is committed and hardworking, he will strive for efficiency and push to make proceedings as efficient and practical as possible.

Thank you for this time to offer my testimony in support of Thomas Haia as District Family Judge.

Aloha,
Courtney Lee K. Haia, PT, DPT

Senator Karl Rhoads
Chairperson, Hawaii State Judiciary Committee
415 South Beretania Street, Room #204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Testimony in Support of Thomas Haia as a District Family Judge

Senator Rhoads,

My name is Adriane Ulsh, my spouse is Courtney Haia, the daughter of Thomas Haia. I am writing in support of Thomas Haia as a District Family Judge.

My father-in-law Thom has always treated me like part of the family, like one of his own daughters. He has always been supportive of Courtney and me. He is a great man, kind, caring, and a stronghold for his family. He is dependable, always there to support us through the early stages of our marriage. He is fair, reasonable, and honest. When we reach out to him for advice, he always offers his honest opinion.

I am confident Thom's decision-making will be of the highest integrity. I know Thom is dedicated to his work and he is committed to making fair and impartial decisions.

Thank you for your time to offer my testimony in support of Thomas Haia as a District Family Judge.

Regards,
Adriane M. Ulsh, PTA

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: bensrose@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for JC7 on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM (Written Only)
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 1:42:45 PM

JC7

Submitted on: 9/29/2020

Testimony for on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying Remotely
Benjamin Rose	Individual	Support	No

Your comments: I am writing in support of Thomas Haia's nomination as District Court Judge. As a deputy prosecutor, I have appeared numerous times in front of Judge Haia in his capacity as a per diem Judge in the district courts. He is smart, efficient, and compassionate. Our judicial system would be lucky to have Judge Haia in the District Court full-time.

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.

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LAW OFFICE OF BRIAN S. KIM

A Limited Liability Law Company

September 30, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC-DELIVERY

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
Senator Karl Roads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokahole, Vice Chair
Honolulu Hale
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Support for the Confirmation of Thomas A.K. Haia to the District Court of the First Circuit (Oahu)

Dear Chairman and Members:

Please accept this letter as my sincere request that you support Thomas A.K. Haia's nomination for the position at the District Court of the First Circuit.

I have frequently appeared before Mr. Haia, where he has presided as a per diem District Court Judge. I am impressed with his hard work ethic, intelligence and patience. He has consistently demonstrated the judicial integrity, character and temperament necessary for this position. I sincerely hope that you will support Mr. Haia's nomination. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Brian S. Kim

Brian S. Kim
Attorney at law

September 29, 2020

Senator Karl Rhoads
Chairperson, Hawaii State Judiciary Committee
415 South Beretania Street, Room #204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Testimony in Support of Thomas Haia for District Family Judge

Dear Senator Rhoads:

My name is Coti Haia. I am Thomas Haia's oldest daughter. On behalf of myself and my 4 siblings, I am writing in support of Thomas Haia to serve as a District Family Judge.

My dad raised me, my two sisters, and our two younger brothers. He kept us busy with extra-curricular activities. He coached our soccer teams, attended our school activities, supported and encouraged us when we played high school and college sports. He stressed the importance of education and worked to give us the opportunity to attend college. My dad is a man of kindness, intelligence, integrity, and courage.

I am confident my dad will do everything he can to treat litigants before him with fairness and dignity, and that he will be judicious and equitable in his decision-making. My dad places a high emphasis on efficiency, and I am certain he will push himself to ensure proceedings are as efficient and practical as possible.

Thank you for this time to offer my testimony in support of Thomas Haia to serve as a District Family Judge.

Aloha,
Coti-Lynne Puamana Haia

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: crystalglendonlaw@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for JC7 on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM (Written Only)*
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:48:58 AM

JC7

Submitted on: 9/30/2020

Testimony for on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying Remotely
Crystal Glendon	Individual	Support	No

Your comments:

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September 28, 2020

Eric Kwick
1195 Kamehame Drive
Honolulu, HI 96825
eekwick@gmail.com

State of Hawaii Senate Judiciary Committee
415 S. Beretania Street
Senate Judiciary Committee, Room 204
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Mr. Thomas A. K. Haia – Judgeship on the Family Court bench of the First Circuit

Dear Senators,

I am writing in strong support of Mr. Thomas Haia, who is a nominee for the Family Court bench judgeship.

I am this year's President of Hawaii Kai Lions Club, where Thomas has been a member since February 2017. Tom has volunteered his time at multiple community projects through the Hawaii Kai Lions Club, including recycling drives, Hawaii Food Bank collections, and the Annual American Heart Association Heart Walk. In every interaction I've had with Tom he has been consistently pleasant, calm and thoughtful, all good qualities in a judge. Plus, he had the good judgement to become a Lion.

Finally, I have recently become more familiar of Tom's work as an attorney and Per Diem District Court Judge. I am even more impressed that Tom has used his legal skills to serve our community through consistent pro bono work and that he specializes in child welfare cases. For the abovementioned reasons, I believe Tom is more than qualified to serve as member of our Hawaii State Judiciary.

Thank you for your time to read this support letter and I encourage you to appoint Mr. Thomas Haia to the Family Court bench.

Sincerely,
Eric E. Kwick

From: [ERIC TANAKA](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Fw: Recommendation-Thomas Kalani Haia
Date: Friday, September 25, 2020 9:02:01 AM

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: ERIC TANAKA <saintsof77@yahoo.com>
To: JDCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov <jdctestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2020, 07:00:42 AM HST
Subject: Fw: Recommendation-Thomas Kalani Haia

Distinguished Members of the JDC,

Attached is my written testimony to Judge Mark Recktenwald in support of Mr. Thomas Kalani Haia. As indicated, I have known Kalani since 1973. Tommy is an upstanding citizen as well as a positive contributor towards society. He is passionate about his profession and a dedicated family man. An independent and strong willed personality he is an individual that demonstrates a solid fortitude and balance mixed in with sensibility and compassion. His dedication to purpose and duty is unmatched and his love of people unwavering. Since high school on the slopes of Kalaepohaku I have always viewed him as a pillar of a man as well as admired his approach towards life in general. That being, keeping things simple and doing what is pono. My previously submitted submission speaks loudly in my support and conviction in support of Kalani. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have further questions. I thank all of you for this opportunity and will continue to pray for Kalani during this eventful process.

Eric Tanaka, Warden
Women's Community Correctional Center
372-9509

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: ERIC TANAKA <saintsof77@yahoo.com>
To: Eric Tanaka <eric.g.tanaka@hawaii.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020, 06:39:45 AM HST
Subject: Fw: Recommendation-Thomas Kalani Haia

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Tanaka, Eric G <eric.g.tanaka@hawaii.gov>
To: chiefjustice@courts.hawaii.gov <chiefjustice@courts.hawaii.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2019, 01:24:28 PM HST
Subject: Recommendation-Thomas Kalani Haia

Chief Justice Mark E. Recktenwald

Supreme Court of Hawaii

417 South King Street

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Judge Recktenwald,

Thank you for allowing me the privilege and honor of submitting my testimonial on behalf of Mr. Thomas Kalani Haia. I have known Kalani since 1973 when we entered St. Louis School as freshmen. Tommy was and still is an individual who attracted positive attention as well as exuded a confidence like no other. I always admired him for having this quality at such a young age. Always a gentleman, a man of conviction and integrity, he conducted himself with unmatched humility and love of people. Tall in stature he posed himself as an eloquent young man, representing the School and his 'Ohana with unwavering compassion and purpose. Over the years I have grown with and through Kalani, having become good friends in not only the social realm but professional as well. He continues to amaze me in his calm demeanor and methodical and unshaken approach to work, life's challenges and everyday issues. Aside from his logical and compassionate persona, Tommy has and can display a bulldog tenacity for what is right and pono. A man of God he has undertaken a destiny and path to be a positive pillar in the community as well as an upstanding public servant. A Father of five(5) he has successfully raised three(3) girls and two(2) boys through discipline, solid example and role modeling and with tons of love. All have become positive community people in their own right. Tommy, as he is often referred to in the St. Louis 'Ohana, continues to remain active in school, class and alumni activities. His energy is endless, morals unmatched and his attention to detail meticulous. I fully believe that his life's experiences and educational teachings have prepared him well for such a challenging and prestigious job as a Judge. If chosen he will continue to bring honor, trust, dedication to duty and a soul emanating love to do what is right by law. I am proud to call Thomas Kalani Haia my Friend, class mate and Brother and strongly endorse his selection for judgeship. I thank you for this opportunity and pray that Kalani is watched over during this process. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have further questions. Again, Mahalo and Malama Pono.

Very Respectfully,

Eric Tanaka, Warden

Women's Community Correctional Center

372-9509

FAYE T. KIMURA, J.D.
(808) 382-7976

September 28, 2020

Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 204
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

RE: THOMAS HAIA: CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT TO FIRST
CIRCUIT DISTRICT COURT

I am writing in support of Thomas Haia's confirmation for appointment to the First Circuit District Court.

In my role as contracted Co-Coordinator of the Judiciary's Hawaii Court Improvement Program since 1995, I have worked with many Family Court practitioners on projects focused on improving the quality of court hearings, collaborating with stakeholders involved in the child welfare system, and ensuring procedural justice for parties involved in litigation. Thomas Haia has been a consistent participant in all of these efforts for at least the last twenty years. There is no question in my mind that Thom, if appointed, will capably and honorably execute his responsibilities as District Court judge and prove to be an exemplary member of that esteemed group.

Thom has excellent litigation skills and is often referred to as a prime example of a zealous but compassionate advocate for parents and children in Family Court. He is also a leader among the parent counsel Oahu group and is asked to be a member of committees when the perspective of a legal practitioner is sought. Examples of committees for which Thom has been an invited participant include the Child Protective Act Task Force (which redrafted the Child Protective Act in 2010), the Oahu Child Welfare Mediation Committee, Court Improvement Program Training Grant Committee, and the Hawaii Zero to Three Court Team. In addition, Thom has volunteered, since the inception of the Annual Child Welfare Law Update Conference in 2007, to be the program emcee, to serve on the program planning committee, and to be a panelist on several topics of interest to stakeholders in the child welfare community. His contribution to this event that informs and brings community stakeholders together on common concerns has been invaluable.

In my additional capacity as a specialist in child welfare at the William S. Richardson School of Law, I have drawn on Thom's knowledge of the child welfare system, applicable federal and state laws, and litigation experience, to draft a curriculum for a Child Welfare Law Clinic that will train and – hopefully—inspire law school students to represent parents and children in Child

Protective Act cases and to provide legal services to parents on issues that put them at risk for involvement with Child Welfare Services.

Thom's concern for his clients has always extended beyond his role as their legal counsel. His compassion, Native Hawaiian upbringing, and understanding of the concrete needs of people in our community are exemplary and he will bring those values and knowledge, which his clients have benefited from, to serve the larger Hawaii community in his new role as judge if he is confirmed.

I strongly urge you to confirm Thomas Haia's appointment.

Sincerely,

FAYE T. KIMURA



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P.O. Box 3654 • Honolulu • Hawai'i • 96811
www.hawaiifriends.org

September 27, 2020

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Judiciary,

We are writing in support of the appointment of Thomas Haia as judge for the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

Several of Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice board of directors and myself, have known Mr. Haia in his professional capacity as a lawyer, and a fellow board member, for many years.

Mr. Haia has practiced in Family Court for over 25 years. Our past experiences working with him make us believe that he has an abundance of integrity, concern for others, and an outstanding understanding of the law and legal procedure. His ability to actively listen, be decisive, communicate effectively, have empathy and compassion, are qualities that would serve him and our community well. We believe Mr. Haia would make an excellent District Family Court Judge.

Please contact me with any questions or comments about our support for Mr. Haia's appointment at (808) 218-3712 or lorenn@hawaiifriends.org.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit our support on behalf of Mr. Haia. Mahalo too for all your continued service as legislators for our community.

Aloha,

Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH
Director, Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice

C: Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice Board of Directors

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: jusbecuz@hotmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for JC7 on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM (Written Only)
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 11:53:57 AM

JC7

Submitted on: 9/29/2020

Testimony for on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying Remotely
Marilyn Yamamoto	Individual	Oppose	No

Your comments: Senator Rhoads, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the confirmation of Thomas Haia for First Circuit Court Judge. I have been advocating for parents in the child welfare system for 8 years. My first two comments to a parent are to explain how critically important it is to engage with their lawyer and to document all contacts and conversations pertaining to the case. The most common response among the 60 Hawaii parents who have experienced a child removal is that they never heard from their appointed lawyer except for a short conference minutes prior to hearings. Most of these parents have no idea that they have statutory rights in a child abuse case. One recent case for which I have documented evidence of "failure to communicate" is a parent who was appointed Mr. Haia as her lawyer 13 days prior to a scheduled trial to contest CWS allegations. He did not reach out to schedule a conference that was expected. When the parent tried to contact him multiple times, he failed to respond until one week later claiming that her emails didn't state the reason for her messages, that it was not necessary for her to have reviewed a pre-trial statement that had been submitted. Mom sent a list of witnesses for trial that went ignored because he claimed it was her responsibility to have provided the reasons for the witnesses. Mr. Haia later ignored concerns that CWS was in noncompliance with court ordered visits with her children in foster care. At one point, Mr. Haia sent a message that if she would choose to have an advocate, he would withdraw from her case. The Parent Guide to Child Welfare recognizes the right of parents to an advocate in addition to an attorney since nearly 20 years ago. Prior to a review hearing several months later, Mom reached out to Mr. Haia multiple times again to gain access to the caseworker report and file an affidavit in response. She received the caseworker report less than 24 hours after filing would have been required, handed her affidavit to him on the day of court and even then, her statement was not filed on the record. Mr. Haia turned Mom's advocate away at the door of the court and then turned in a notice of withdrawal with no prior notification. The Rules of Professional Conduct, ABA Standards of Practice for Lawyers who Represent Parents in Child Abuse Cases and the ABA Hawaii Guidelines of Professional Courtesy specifically address meaningful communication with clients. "(d) Does not fail or refuse, without justification, to respond to the phone calls and written communications of his or her clients and/or opposing counsel." One of the penners of federal funding in 1974 made the remark that parent lawyers are to be the

checks and balances for abuse of power by the state and judges in a child welfare case. There is significant evidence that parent representation is flawed in every state. I oppose Mr. Haia's appointment to the bench because of his bias that parents accused of child abuse/neglect do not have the right to diligent representation. I was in contact with his client from the date of his appointment to the date of his withdrawal. No citizen should make as much effort as this Mom to engage with her lawyer, yet be denied an explanation of her rights, the attorney strategy or a voice in her defense of child neglect.

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF

JC7

Submitting For Consideration And Confirmation To The District Family Court Of
The First Circuit, Judicial Nominee
THOMAS A.K. HAIA
For A Term To Expire In Six Years

Before the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Date: Thursday, October 1, 2020, 1:00 p.m.
Location: State Capitol, Conference Room 016

Testifier: MEI NAKAMOTO

◇

To: Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Jarrett Keohokalole, and Other Members of
the Committee

I support the appointment of Thomas A.K. Haia to the District Family Court of the
First Circuit.

Mr. Haia and I were colleagues practicing family law for almost 20 years. When I
began practicing family law, Mr. Haia's practice included divorces and child
custody evaluations. Although in the divorce cases we were opponents, I
respected his knowledge of the law, sense of fairness, and basic ability to
understand people to seek him out as a child custody evaluator. Several years
later, Mr. Haia's practice focused on representing parents accused of abusing or
neglecting their children. At that time and for many years thereafter, I was one of
the attorneys assisting the Judiciary's social workers and Volunteer Guardians ad
Litem who are now called the Court Appointed Special Advocates. Therefore, I
had many occasions to observe Mr. Haia, who almost always was my opponent.
It was during that part of our careers that Mr. Haia impressed me the most.

Despite many concluding, without due process, that his clients deserved to lose
their children, Mr. Haia exhibited unflagging dedication to protecting his clients'
interests and preparing them and himself for the cases. He knew the law and
advocated strongly for its just application for his clients. Importantly, regardless
of what they might have done, Mr. Haia always treated his clients with respect.
There were many cases, and the pace was unrelenting. While Mr. Haia could
have easily taken a path of less resistance by treating the cases as rote and
people as fungible, he never did.

In addition, there were few people who were as calm as Mr. Haia during a storm
of arguments and emotions. While others would roll their eyes at or spew

invective about his clients, he would calmly listen. When it was his turn, he would respectfully and calmly address the substance of the issues.

There is no doubt in my mind that Mr. Haia has the qualities of a good Family Court judge and the experience with family law that is necessary for a consistent approach and competent rulings. The people of Hawai'i will be served well by the Senate's confirmation.

Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions or if I can assist the Committee in any way.

Sincerely,



Mei Nakamoto

mei.nakamoto@gmail.com
450 S. Cherry Street, Suite 500
Denver, Colorado 80246
(303) 728-4271

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: michelle.moorhead@legalaidhawaii.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for JC7 on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM (Written Only)
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:27:41 AM

JC7

Submitted on: 9/30/2020

Testimony for on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying Remotely
Michelle Moorhead	Individual	Support	No

Your comments: Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Judiciary Committee, My name is Michelle Moorhead and I am the Managing Attorney of the Family Law Division at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii. I currently serve as the elected Chair of the Family Law Section of the Hawaii State Bar Association. Notwithstanding these affiliations, I am writing to you in my personal capacity to support, endorse and recommend that Thomas Haia to be confirmed as a District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit. I have known Thomas for approximately eight years in his capacity as a court-appointed attorney for parents in HRS § 587A cases. He is very respected within the child welfare community. I would describe him as one of the most experienced and effective court-appointed counsel who truly understands the law and fiercely advocates on behalf of his clients. He is a hard-worker who is not afraid to tackle difficult situations. Currently, Thomas and I work together on many cases where we represent opponents in litigation. I have also worked together with him where we represent clients whose interests align. Thomas is a problem solver who thinks of outside of the box solutions. Even in high-conflict situations, he remains balanced and objective, yet does not back down from his positions. He does this all with dignity and respect. These skills will certainly be an asset on the bench. Outside of the courtroom, Thomas' dedication to public service is well-proven. He has worked as a per diem judge in district court. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated an enduring commitment to protecting Hawaii's most vulnerable populations—especially children and survivors of domestic violence. It is also my understanding that he also works pro bono for family law matters in the Waimanalo community. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Respectfully submitted, Michelle K. Moorhead

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From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: rlesteratty@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for JC7 on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM (Written Only)
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 10:11:03 AM

JC7

Submitted on: 9/24/2020

Testimony for on Oct 1, 2020 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying Remotely
Rebecca Lester	Individual	Support	No

Your comments: I am in support of Thomas Haia being selected as a judge. I have worked with Mr. Haia for the last few years as parent counsel. He is an extremely hard worker, fair and unbiased. Throughout the time I have known him, Mr. Haia is always professional, prepared and honest. He treats everyone with compassion and civility. Mr. Haia will make an excellent judge and I highly support his confirmation. Thank you, Rebecca Lester

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Simeona A. Mariano, Esq.

91-1045 Makahani Street
Kapolei, HI 96707
(808) 368-2937

September 29, 2020

Senator Karl Rhodes, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capital
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Thomas A. K. Haia, District Family Court of the First Circuit
Judicial Comm. No. 7

Dear Senators Rhodes and Keohokalole,

I respectfully support the confirmation of Thomas A. K. Haia to the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

In my current capacity as a Deputy Attorney General (Family Law Division), I have the pleasure of working with Thom, who represents parents, in child welfare services cases that I handle. Thom is a very hard working attorney that zealously represents each client and works with other parties in every case to make sure that the focus is the best interest of the children. He has always been respectful, fair and diligent when dealing with such delicate and complex issues that families face in these cases. Thom has many years of experience practicing in the family court and he is extremely knowledgeable in family law. Thom's work as a per diem judge in the district court will also be a great asset when he becomes a full-time judge in both district court and family court.

Prior to joining the Department of the Attorney General, I worked with Thom at the Prosecutor's Office in Kauai. Thom was tasked with the juvenile court and district court calendars. Thom was a very hardworking and dedicated attorney then as well. Being a new deputy prosecutor, he put in the long hours to learn the ropes, handle the high volume of cases, and keep up with the many demands that many prosecutors face. Thom was a true team player who always offered a helping hand and got along well with the staff, attorneys and police.

I am happy to call Thom a dear friend too. I can say with confidence that Thom is a very dependable, determined, compassionate and humble individual who treats others like family and with kindness. In many ways, Thom has also become a cherished mentor who has provided me with guidance and support both professionally and personally. I have also seen how dedicated Thom is to his family, especially his children, and to giving back to the community every chance he can.

Thom's background and experience speaks volumes and shows he has what it takes to serve and excel as a judge. I wholeheartedly believe that Thom is deserving of this opportunity to join the Family Court Bench and will make invaluable contributions to the Hawaii Judiciary as a whole.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simeona A. Mariano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Simeona A. Mariano, Esq.

From: [Tammy Du Pont](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Support for Thomas Haia
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 6:55:32 PM

Aloha Chairperson Rhoads and Judiciary Committee members:

This letter is in support of Judicial Nominee Thomas Haia. I have known Mr. Haia on a personal and professional basis for the past twenty years. In that time, on a professional level I have come to know that Mr. Haia possesses the qualities important for judicial office.

Obviously, Mr. Haia possesses the intellectual capacity to be appointed a judge. Although Mr. Haia's practice is primarily focused on representing indigent parents in child welfare cases, over the years he has represented litigants in many Family Court matters. Mr. Haia has and continues to represent former welfare clients when they need assistance obtaining Orders for Protection, custody orders in divorce and paternity matter, as well as private guardianships for children living with grandparents. He possesses the knowledge, understanding, empathy and compassion to work with people from all walks of life.

Information I have received from friends who work with Mr. Haia in District Court report he exercises sound judgment, decisiveness, objectivity in his work as per diem judge in Honolulu District Court. I have personally witnessed Mr. Haia's willingness to learn new legal concepts as I observe him researching unfamiliar legal issues that arise in his cases or new caselaw that has been decided. Mr. Haia diligently reviews calendars so that he is familiar with the procedural background of cases appearing before him. He is not one to shy away from difficult decisions and also is not afraid to admit not knowing things. He is honest and humble, willingly asking for assistance and help when he needs it.

Mr. Haia exhibits authority and fair dealing to those whom appear before him. He possesses and demonstrates clear and efficient communication skills. His work ethic is beyond reproach and he possesses and demonstrates efficient time management skills.

On a personal note, Mr. Haia is an honest, hard working, kind and generous man. He has accepted my children and acknowledges my grandchildren as his. He has a kind heart and a keen ability dealing with our grandchildren.

Mr. Haia has also accepted other children into his life and home, as well. In addition to his two sons who were former foster youth, he has provided shelter to a little girl whose mother was involved with drugs and criminal activity, a young man whose mother suffered from severe mental health issues and another young man who struggled through a failed adoption. Mr. Haia has a true desire to help others to accomplish the goal of being productive individuals with purpose in their lives.

Senators, without reservation I ask that you support Judicial Nominee Thomas Haia for a District Family Court Judge. Thank you for your time and kind consideration of my request.

Tammy Du Pont

Sent from my iPhone

THE LAW OFFICE OF
WALTER J. RODBY

733 BISHOP STREET, MAKAI TOWER, SUITE 2302
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE NO.: (808)545-5490

September 30, 2020

Senator Karl Rhoads

Chair- Senate Judiciary Committee

RE: **Thomas Haia &**
Submitting for consideration and confirmation as District Family Court
Judge for the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

DATE: Thursday, October 1, 2020
TIME: 1:00 p.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 229- State
Capitol

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter to express my complete support of **Thomas Haia** and his nomination to Judge of the District / Family Court of the First Circuit.

I am certain that he will be an asset to our judiciary, and the people of the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Very truly yours,

WALTER J. RODBY



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

Thomas A.K. Haia
District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit (JC7)

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

FROM: P. Gregory Frey
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 016
State Capitol

The Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the nomination of Thomas A.K. Haia for the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

The HSBA Board of Directors followed its multi-step process to inform the confirming authority of its findings on this appointment.

- Notification to the nominee of the HSBA appointment review process, which includes a questionnaire requesting educational credentials, legal and other professional work experiences, personal references; a resume; a copy of the 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.
- Notification via electronic transmission to the HSBA membership of the appointment and a request for comments on the nominee
- Appointment of a three-person review subcommittee of HSBA Board members by the President which serves as a neutral fact-finding body to: review documentation submitted by the nominee, contact references submitted by the nominee, review comments received from the HSBA membership, and conduct follow-up member contact for clarification, if necessary, for presentation to the HSBA Board.
- Submittal of a report by the three-person review subcommittee to the President, and subsequently to the entire Board.

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Testimony of HSBA

JC7

Hearing on October 1, 2020

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- Meeting of the President, the Executive Director, and the nominee prior to the scheduled interview of the nominee by the Board.
- Interview of the nominee by the HSBA Board.
- Deliberation of the HSBA Board to determine if the nominees is qualified or unqualified.
- Submittal of the HSBA Board's recommendation to the confirming authority.

The HSBA President and the Executive Director met with Mr. Haia on September 22, 2020 to discuss the subcommittee's findings. On September 23rd, Mr. Haia was interviewed by the HSBA Board of Directors in executive session.

Documentation submitted by Mr. Haia was reviewed and the references listed were contacted for their personal opinions and observations. The comments and letters received from HSBA members reflected an affirmation of Mr. Haia in all categories of the HSBA criteria which include:

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

Nominee Thomas Haia had a non-traditional path when he pursued a legal career. Mr. Haia has extensive experience in the private practice of law and currently serves as a per diem judge. He will be able to apply the skills he has developed in Family Court matters involving abused and neglected children during his assignment to the Child Welfare calendar.

Members report that he has a high level of integrity, is ethical and genuinely cares about people. As a private practitioner, he is a strong practical advocate for his clients and takes the time to craft unique and skilled arguments. He also has the patience and skills to bring people together. Members have seen him work with very difficult clients, but maintains his composure and decorum to the Court.

Mr. Haia's character traits, experience, professional demeanor, compassion, and sense of fairness will serve him well as a Hawaii State Judiciary judge.

After the interview of the nominee, which included dialogue and questioning relating to his background, experiences, and reasons for pursuing the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit, the Board of the Hawaii State Bar Association found Mr. Thomas A.K. Haia to be **QUALIFIED** for the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

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