

JC 1

Submitting for consideration
and confirmation
to the District Family Court
of the Fifth Circuit,
Judicial Nominee,
STEPHANIE R.S. CHAR,
for a term to expire in 6
years.

November 9, 2020

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: Stephanie Char
Appointee for Judge of the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit

I am submitting written testimony in support of District Family Court Judge Nominee, Stephanie Char. I have known Steph for more than seventeen (17) years since I began working as an attorney at the Office of the Public Defender in 2003. I worked with Steph in the Appeals, District Court, Family Court (Adult Criminal), and Felony Divisions on the island of Oahu. I can say without a doubt that Steph possesses all the necessary attributes to becoming an excellent Judge. I've witnessed her strong work ethic and dedication to the legal profession firsthand. In 2003, Steph volunteered full-time at the Public Defender's Office in Honolulu because there were no open positions available. She was officially hired several months later and practiced with zealous advocacy and compassion for all her clients. She was very well-liked by attorneys, supervisors, staff, and each and every one of her client's. I can say without a doubt, that Steph will be greatly missed. At the same time, the Judiciary will have everything to gain.

Sincerely,

/S/ Alan J.T. Komagome

Alan J.T. Komagome
Deputy Public Defender

November 11, 2022

Re: Consideration and Confirmation to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Stephanie R. S. Char on 11/16/2020 at 1:00 pm

Dear Chairman Karl Rhodes, Vice Chairman Jarrett Keohokalole, and members of Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Alison Tom and I am an Inpatient Pharmacist at Kaiser Moanalua Medical Center. I am writing on behalf of Stephanie R. S. Char, my cousin, whom I have known for the past 45 years. I support the confirmation of Stephanie Char to District Family Court Judge of the Fifth Circuit.

Stephanie is a dedicated wife, mother, daughter, niece, cousin, and friend. I can confirm that she is a person of great integrity and is dedicated to her family and work. I have witnessed her caring for her husband and children, assisting her mother through medical challenges, and have also been a recipient of her care and hospitality throughout my life. Along with support she gives her family, she has a witty sense of humor, and is an engaging story-teller (much like her father, the late Raymond Sato). She has a gravitating personality, yet is level-headed and genuine in her compassion and treatment of all who are lucky to be on the receiving end.

Stephanie also has been active in her Kauai community through memberships on various boards on Kauai and coaching youth soccer. She has been with the Office of the Public Defender and serving the people of Oahu and Kauai in her dedication to this work for almost 20 years.

This commitment to public service and previous experience in the Office of Public Defender on Oahu and Kauai, as well as her care and dedication to family makes her a strong and worthy choice for District Family Court Judge. I wholeheartedly recommend Stephanie Char to District Family Court Judge of the Fifth Circuit without reservation.

Sincerely,

Alison Y. S. Tom

From: [clifford.nakea](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Confirmation of Stephanie Sato Char, Fifth Circuit District Family Court Judgeship
Date: Sunday, November 8, 2020 10:20:53 AM

Dear Senators:

My name is Clifford Nakea. I have had the honor of serving the people of Kauai on the bench for nearly 24 years and would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to support the appointment of Stephanie Sato Char to a judgeship on Kauai.

My family moved to Kauai in 1974 from Honolulu and we have lived in the same neighborhood as the Sato (and now Char) family since then. We have always been informed of Stephanie's impressive accomplishments in academics and athletics at all levels of her education. As an attorney with the public defender office, she has continued to impress us with her effective representation of her clients.

In summary, we believe that Stephanie would be an excellent choice for this judgeship. If you believe that I might be able to contribute additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Aloha,
Clifford L. Nakea

From: [David Hayakawa](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: JC1: Confirmation of Stephanie Char
Date: Saturday, November 14, 2020 10:56:40 PM

Chair Rhoads and the members of the Judiciary Committee:

I submit this written testimony in complete support of the judicial nomination of Stephanie Char to the District-Family Court of the Fifth Circuit. I have practiced criminal law in Hawaii for over 30 years and I practice regularly in the Courts of the 5th Circuit. I am very aware of Ms. Char's outstanding legal career, first as a Deputy Public Defender and then as the head of the Kauai Branch of the State of Hawaii's Office of the Public Defender. Ms. Char is an outstanding trial attorney who has a clear understanding of the people of Kauai and the issues facing the community. As a judge I know that Ms. Char will effectively and fairly manage the crowded 5th Circuit District/Family Court calendar. I strongly urge you to support her nomination. If I can answer any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely, David Hayakawa

David M. Hayakawa
Law Office of David Hayakawa
Davies Pacific Center | 841 Bishop St., Suite 410 | Honolulu, HI 96813
Tel: 808-537-1529 | Fax: 808-523-9137

November 13, 2020

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarret Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Senate Committee On Judiciary

Re: *JC1 – Consideration and Confirmation to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit, Judicial Nominee Stephanie R. S. Char, for a term to expire in 6 years.*

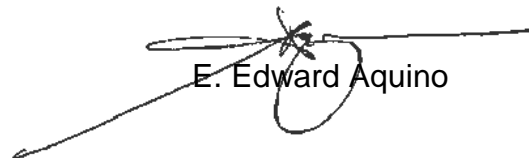
Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Senate:

I am writing in support of Stephanie R. S. Char's nomination to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit. Ms. Char and I first met when we became colleagues at the Office of the Public Defender. Over the years, I have come to know her very well and have grown to respect her personally and professionally.

In working alongside Ms. Char, I have found her to be a person who is honest, patient, and compassionate when dealing with others, as well as, committed to ensuring justice. In legal practice, Ms. Char has repeatedly demonstrated her keen understanding of the law and how it affects people in their daily life – a quality that I believe is essential in a judge.

Ms. Char would make an outstanding District Family Court Judge and I urge you to confirm her nomination to serve as District Family Court Judge of the Fifth Circuit.

Sincerely,



E. Edward Aquino

Senate Judiciary Committee
JDCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

J. Grant Giventer, Esq. 7958#
2575 Kuhio Street, Apt 402
Honolulu HI 96815
(808) 277-9099

November 10, 2020

WRITTEN TESTIMONY on behalf of:
Fifth Circuit District Family Judge Nominee, Stephanie R. S. Char

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

Please accept this letter in support of Stephanie R.S. Char's nomination for the Fifth Circuit District Family Judge position on Kauai.

I have known Stephanie since 2004 when we both worked as a Deputy Public Defenders on Oahu. Having worked with and observed Stephanie advocate on behalf of her clients in court over many years, I can attest to the fact that she is a skilled litigator, a fighter, and a person of great moral character.

Stephanie is also a versatile attorney in the sense that I have seen her litigate and win difficult felony cases with illogical/disagreeable clients. Her exceptional courtroom skills and steady hand are the result of years of case law study, daily applications of the rules of evidence, and countless courtroom appearances before many different learned judges.

Above all, I would say Stephanie is a critical thinker, a great communicator and a hard worker who utilizes all available resources to get the job done.

While Kauai may be considered a relatively small community with many people knowing each other, Stephanie's many years of courtroom legal practice has prepared her to make critical decisions that affect people's lives in her community. For all these reasons, I strongly recommend that you confirm my friend and former colleague, Stephanie R. S. Char, for the Fifth Circuit District Family Judge position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

J. Grant Giventer, Esq. 7958#

Disclaimer- I am employed as a State of Hawaii, Deputy Attorney General in the Employment Law Division. The opinions and representations espoused here are my own personal views and not that of my employer.

Date: 11/9/2020

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: JC1, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Stephanie R.S. Char

Hearing: Monday, November 16, 2020, 1:00 p.m.
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 016
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

I am writing in **strong support** of the confirmation of Judicial Nominee **Stephanie R.S. Char** to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit.

Sincerely,

Jacquie Esser

From: [Jacy Youn](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: SUPPORT: Testimony supporting the judicial confirmation of Stephanie R.S. Char
Date: Monday, November 9, 2020 7:02:44 PM

Aloha Chair Rhoads and Judiciary Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of judicial nominee, Stephanie R.S. Char, who is a candidate for a position in the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit. Stephanie and I grew up a stone's throw away from each other in Wailua Homesteads on Kaua'i. We attended elementary, middle, and high school together at Kapa'a and we even set off for the University of Denver together, where we spent the first year together as roommates. In our adult lives, we remained close and I am proud to say that I was one of her bridesmaids at her wedding.

I firmly believe that not only would Steph make an excellent family court judge, but that her commitment to justice and rigorous moral compass coupled with her high emotional quotient make her uniquely qualified for the position. When she first became a lawyer, long before I knew I would one day become one also, we would talk for hours on end about why she had chosen a career path "defending criminals." Back then, in my naivety, I couldn't see why someone as bright as her who had so much to give to the community would choose to protect and fight for those who some might say deserved it the least. In the years since, I've come to understand that it has been in fact such a blessing for our small community to have someone like Stephanie standing up for those who society had otherwise given up on. Because that's the only way the justice system works is if you have great people on both sides.

As the former Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii Kauai Branch, I had the misfortune of spending a lot of time in family court watching our kids deal with some pretty tough stuff. I know that family court is not an easy or comfortable place for most people. I believe Steph has the right temperament and disposition to fairly adjudicate the type of proceedings that come before the court. Yes, she is an attorney who tirelessly advocates for her clients, but she is also a good friend, a longtime stalwart in the local community, and a dedicated mother of two. Like all good moms, she will have empathy for families – and most importantly, seek to provide solutions that are in the best interest of the children. She has seen the dark, seedy under belly of Kauai and understands the impact of drugs, abuse, divorce, economic pressure, and the like on local families and will always strive to do what's right and fair and will do it with deep compassion. And she will do so without judgement as well.

In her 17 years as a public defender in Hawaii, she has encountered many different types of personalities and one thing I have never seen her do is look down upon or judge anyone. She operates from a place of empathy and has an uncanny ability to adapt her communication style to best fit the person or people listening, be it the attorneys, victims, or courtroom stenographer. In other words, she's got a great knack for connecting with people and making them feel at ease, which I think would be such a strong and desired trait in a family court judge.

As this recent election cycle has made clear, we as people are in desperate need of kindness, empathy, and comfort. In a tense and emotional family courtroom, even more so. I believe

Stephanie would bring those attributes and her strong pursuit of justice to any courtroom and that Hawaii's District Court would be lucky to have her. I would again like to reiterate my strong support on behalf of Stephanie and welcome any additional questions or opportunity for discussion.

Much Mahalo,

Jacy L. Youn
Executive Vice President, AIA Honolulu

The American Institute of Architects and Center for Architecture

828 Fort Street Mall, Suite 100, Honolulu, HI 96813

T: (808) 628 7244

M: (808) 425 0230

E: jacy@aiahonolulu.org

W: www.aiahonolulu.org

From: [James Rouse](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: The confirmation of Stephanie Char
Date: Sunday, November 15, 2020 8:20:18 AM

I write to strongly support the confirmation of Stephanie Char to the position of District/Family Court Judge. She is a wonderful lawyer and a wonderful person. The people of Kauai will be greatly benefited by her wisdom and work ethic. The people of Hawaii are lucky to have her in this great position. Thank you for your consideration. Jim Rouse Attorney at Law.Hawaii State Bar number 6326

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**Testimony of James S. Tabe,
State Public Defender**

Senate Committee on Judiciary

November 13, 2020

JC1: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Stephanie R.S. Char

Hearing: November 16, 2020, 1:00 p.m.

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

I fully support the confirmation of Stephanie R.S. Char, Judicial Nominee, to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit.

I have known Ms. Char since 2003 when she joined the Office of the Public Defender. She has grown from a young inexperienced attorney to a well-respected member of the legal community. Ms. Char is highly qualified to serve on the district court bench. She holds herself to high standards of preparation and performance. She holds herself to high standards of preparation and performance. She is well respected by the judges and the prosecutors for her professionalism, integrity, and legal knowledge. She not only has the intellect to grasp complex legal issues, but she also has the ability to articulate and explain her analysis in a thoughtful, thorough, and intelligent manner.

As the supervising attorney of the Kauai Branch, she has been an exceptional leader, manager, and mentor. Despite the pandemic, the budget cuts, and personnel shortages, the Kauai Branch through Ms. Char's leadership continues to provide the Kauai indigent community excellent legal representation.

In addition to her leadership and legal acumen, Ms. Char possesses a strong work ethic, good common sense, and practical judgment, which makes her well qualified and well-suited to serve as a district family court judge. Although it has been a number of years since I regularly appeared before the Family Court, I have not forgotten the rigors and the demands placed upon the district court and district family court judges. Judges must be intelligent, thoughtful, and fair. Family court judges must also have the demeanor, character, and sensitivity to treat each individual -- including litigants, witnesses, and attorneys -- with dignity, patience, respect and compassion, as they touch the most people in the community on a daily basis and have the broadest reach and impact upon the public. Moreover, family court judges must also be hardworking, efficient, and organized to deal with the voluminous and demanding workload. Having worked closely with Ms. Char, I can say without reservation that she possesses such qualities.

In addition, because district family court judges touch the most people in the community on a daily basis and has the broadest reach and impact upon the public, the judicial applicant must have the judicial temperament, demeanor, and character to be successful. I know that Ms. Char will treat each individual -- including attorneys, litigants, and witnesses -- with dignity, patience, respect, and compassion.

As long as I have known her, Ms. Char has practiced law with competence, zealousness, compassion, integrity, and humility. She has demonstrated that she possesses the ability, the experience, and the qualities to be a district family court judge. Ms. Char will certainly be an asset to the judiciary, and I am proud to support her for a seat on the bench.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Tabe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James S. Tabe

From: [Marissa Agena](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Confirmation of Stephanie Char
Date: Sunday, November 15, 2020 9:28:41 AM

Dear Chair Rhoads and the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Marissa Agena and I have practiced criminal law in Hawaii for three years. I strongly support the nomination of Stephanie Char. During my entire three years of practice, Stephanie has been my supervisor and mentor. I have seen first-hand her passion and dedication for the pursuit of justice. I have no doubts that she will make an excellent Judge and that Kauai will be a better place with her on the bench. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,
Marissa Agena

Date: November 11, 2020

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: JC1, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Stephanie R.S. Char

Hearing: Monday, November 16, 2020, 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016
415 South Beretania Street

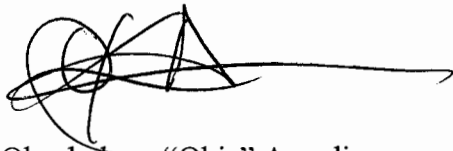
It is my privilege to write this testimony in support of the confirmation to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Stephanie R.S. Char. I worked with Ms. Char at the State Office of the Public Defender on Oahu for approximately ten (10) years prior to her promotion to the position of supervisor at the State Office of the Public Defender on Kauai.

During her time at our Oahu office, I observed Ms. Char litigate multiple complex criminal cases with zeal and passion. She is a tireless advocate and fighter. She is knowledgeable in criminal law. I witnessed her composure and knowledge firsthand in the way she handled her cases during motion hearings, sentencings, and jury trials. She was prepared for her court matters. Ms. Char is a consummate professional who possesses great interpersonal skills. She works well with others and treats everyone with dignity and respect.

While at our Oahu office, Ms. Char participated in office brainstorming sessions helping other attorneys tackle legal issues in their cases in preparation for jury trial. She has been a student group leader during our annual State of Hawaii Public Defender Seminar and Trial Advocacy Program. She consistently responds to office-wide emails offering her insights and suggestions to questions posed by fellow attorneys seeking assistance with legal issues. She is a leader and has the respect of attorneys and supervisors throughout all the State Public Defender offices.

I strongly support the confirmation of Judicial Nominee, Stephanie R.S. Char, to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit. She has the character and skills to be an effective judge. Confirming Ms. Char would reflect positively on our judiciary. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Okechukwu Amadi', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Okechukwu "Okie" Amadi
Deputy Public Defender
State of Hawaii

From: [Salina Kanai](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: In Support of STEPHANIE CHAR (nee Sato)
Date: Monday, November 9, 2020 8:45:47 AM

I am writing to strongly support the appointment of Stephanie R.S. Char as District Family Court Judge of the Fifth Circuit.

I am friends with Steph and have known her since 2004, when we were both Deputy Public Defenders in Honolulu. Therefore, I am writing in support of her both as a friend and a former colleague. Steph was an attorney senior to me, and she was always a hard-working, strong advocate for her clients. She was a colleague with whom I frequently consulted on my cases, and her trial experience is vast. Her comfort in any courtroom will be plain as a judge, and her ability to get along and communicate well with all kinds of personalities will be an asset to her judicial career.

Steph has an excellent temperament, an open mind, a willingness to learn areas of the law with which she is not familiar, and she is compassionate and fair. She is deeply rooted to her community on Kaua'i, having been raised there. Given that she and her husband, Noa, are raising their young children there, she has a strong commitment to make her community a better place.

While her appointment to the judiciary would be a great loss to the Public Defender office, it will be a tremendous gain for the Fifth Circuit. I cannot recommend her highly enough.

Thank you.

Salina M. Kanai

Salina M. Kanai
Interim Federal Public Defender
District of Hawai'i
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 7104
Hon, HI 96850
808-541-2521

November 7, 2020

**Hawai'i State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Senate Judiciary Committee, Room 204
Honolulu, HI 96813**

RE: Support Letter for Stephanie Char--District Family Court Judge, 5th Circuit

Aloha Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in support of Stephanie Char's nomination for District Family Court Judge on Kauai. Ms. Char is kind, generous, warm, funny, humble, and smart. These are terrific qualities for navigating and moderating the pain and trauma of Family Court. At this point I've known her for about 30 years, and I think she would be an outstanding judge.

We first met at Kapa'a High School, where she was a couple years above me. I remember her most back then for her kindness and sense of inclusivity – she was friends with kids from all different backgrounds and she had a talent for bringing the most different people together and make them all feel welcome. She was kind of like a glue that could unite different people who wouldn't normally get along or spend time together. 15 years after she graduated high school, we began working together at the Office of the Public Defender on Oahu. Although she was already handling felony cases while I was only appearing in district court, I got the opportunity to spend a good deal of time with her in the office, and she was a wonderful public defender.

She is passionate about justice and helping people in need, and she fought hard for her clients every day. She always made time to share a laugh and some words of comfort and wisdom with her co-workers to help them shake off whatever awful day in court, tragic client mishap, or miscarriage of justice had gotten them down. She helped the Oahu office in numerous ways, but her ability to raise morale is what I miss the most. She taught me that people in our job have to shake off the emotional (and occasionally literal) punches we take in court from judges, prosecutors, and clients, and get back out there, because ALL of our clients need us, and they need us every day. She kept me fighting the grind of endless cases, constant sadness, and uphill battles in court, and taught me not to spend all my emotional reserves worrying about one or two clients, but to give all my clients the best work I could.

Sadly, although I was raised on Kauai and my mother still lives there, I rarely get back home, so I haven't had much opportunity to see how Ms. Char runs the Kauai PD's office. Knowing her as I do, I am confident she's a terrific boss, and as much as I want her to be a judge, I suspect it will be very hard to fill her shoes.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sat K. Freedman
Sat K. Freedman
Deputy Public Defender

My name is Steven Nichols and I am a Deputy Public Defender writing in support of Stephanie Char for the open judicial vacancy on Kauai. I have been a Deputy Public Defender working in Honolulu Hawaii for the past 16 years. Ms Char and I started our careers at the Office of the Public Defender at the same time and quickly became close friends.

I know that professionally, Ms. Char is an excellent attorney. She is the head of the Kauai Office of the Public Defenders and is deeply respected by all the attorneys across all the islands. She inherited a Kauai Office that wasn't running as efficiently as it should be and she quickly turned it around. She was able to do so because unlike many supervisors, she did the same work as the front-line trial attorneys in addition to her administrative work. The attorneys under her wanted to work hard not only because they cared about their clients, but because of her. She inspired them to work harder than they had in a long time. She has always been ethical and reasonable in her practice and yet balanced it with passion for her clients and the work that we do. These qualities will make her an excellent judge.

In a personal capacity, she has been as good and as loyal a friend as one could want. She cares about people, not just her friends or her clients, but the people in her community. She was born and raised in Kauai and has deep roots in the island. I cannot think of a better candidate for the judiciary in Kauai than Ms. Char. Her character, her legal skills and her deep and passionate roots in the island make her the best choice.

I would ask that you confirm Ms. Char as I know that she would have a positive impact on the judicial system and the legal community. I thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Steven Nichols

Taryn Tomasa
1130 N. Nimitz Hwy. A-254
Honolulu, HI 96817
(808) 586-2080

November 12, 2020

Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
415 S. Beretania Street
Judiciary Committee, Room 204
State Capital
Honolulu, HI 96813
via email: JDCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

Re: JC1 District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit, Judicial Nominee Stephanie R.S. Char
Hearing: November 18, 2020, 1:00 PM

Senators Chairman Rhoads and Committee Members:

This letter is in support of the nomination of STEPHANIE R.S. CHAR to the family or district court bench in the Fifth Circuit. I have known Ms. Char for over seventeen years, and it is without hesitation that I submit this letter in support of her nomination. Ms. Char possesses the experience, character, and intellect that this challenging and demanding position requires.

I work with Ms. Char at the Office of the Public Defender and for a number of years we worked together in the Oahu office. In the time that I have worked with her, Ms. Char demonstrated inherent leadership abilities, excellent trial advocacy and litigation skills, as well as a sharp intellect. After many years as an accomplished trial attorney, Ms. Char became the supervisor at the Kaua'i Office of the Public Defender. She trained attorneys new to the legal profession and new to criminal advocacy and defense, bringing organization, stability and efficiency to the Kaua'i office. Even now as the supervising attorney, in addition to her administrative duties and commitments, Ms. Char balances a case load handling the most difficult and serious cases. Indeed, Ms. Char has the uncommon ability to interpret applicable cases and rules that are determinative in a case and to propose and facilitate equitable resolution. Ms. Char has demonstrated that she can manage a large volume of cases and possesses the ability to facilitate resolution of cases with sensitivity and practicality.

As an attorney, Ms. Char has demonstrated that she possesses the experience and intellect to be a successful judge. And as an individual, who is also a wife and mother, she has shown dedication, integrity, and compassion. Both professionally and personally, Ms. Char has always treated all individuals with respect and humanity. Ms. Char's character indicates that she will continue to treat individuals, attorneys, litigants, and court staff with dignity, respect, and compassion.

As a citizen and a practicing attorney, I believe that the State of Hawaii deserves the best and most qualified judges. District and family courts impact the most people on a daily basis. Based on my experience as an appellate attorney and transcripts from trials and Orders from the Fifth Circuit, it is clear that the judicial applicant must demonstrate a mastery and understanding of the law, caselaw and rules, especially evidentiary rules applied in a fast paced and emotional trial setting. In the past, the previous appointees have seriously lacked in these fundamental areas. Based on my knowledge and experience with Ms. Char, it is apparent that she has the skills, expertise, demeanor and dedication to be a successful and invaluable asset to the State of Hawaii as a 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

Timothy E. Ho
745 Fort Street Mall, 17th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

September 26, 2020

Hon. Karl Rhoads
Chairperson
Senate Judiciary Committee
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: JC 1 STEPHANIE R. S. CHAR

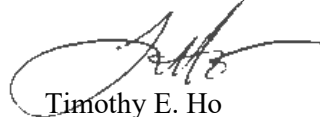
Chair Rhoads and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in support of Stephanie Char's judicial confirmation to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit. I have known Steph for over fifteen (15) years, having supervised her at the Office of the Public Defender prior to her moving back home to Kaua'i. I was also privileged to work closely with Steph after we selected her to become a supervisor of our Kaua'i office.

As an attorney, Steph is respected for her dogged determination and passion for the law. Steph's work ethic and compassion for her fellow humans will serve her and the Judiciary well during her tenure as a family court judge. I urge you to confirm Ms. Char to the judicial position of Family Court Judge of the District Court, Fifth Circuit.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on her behalf.

Mahalo Nui Loa,



Timothy E. Ho

From: wtsatohi@gmail.com
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Testimony for Stephanie Char for Kauai Family Court Judge
Date: Thursday, November 12, 2020 2:04:00 PM

Dear Sirs:

I am writing in support of Stephanie Reiko Sato Char for the position of Family Court Judge on Kauai. I am a retired Engineering Manager from SSFM International, Inc. and an uncle to Stephanie. She is the daughter of Jean and the late Ray Sato on Kauai.

I believe Stephanie will serve in an exemplary manner given her litigation experiences in courts on Honolulu and on Kauai. In my opinion, she very well balanced as a person, wife and mother. She lives with her husband, two children and mother, who she cares for and helps as well as receive help from for occasional baby sitting duties. I believe she has the right attributes to make her a fair and progressive Family Court Judge. Please give her a favorable approval to this most honorable position.

Yours Truly,
Warren Sato
Retired Resident of Hawaii
email: wtsatohi@gmail.com

November 13, 2020

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 1, TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF
STEPHANIE R.S. CHAR to the District Family Court of the Fifth Circuit

HEARING: Monday, November 16, 2020, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 016

I have been a practicing attorney for nearly 33 years and have worked with many Judges and lawyers. I have personally worked with Ms. Stephanie Char (“Stephanie”) for over seventeen years at the Office of the Public Defender. Based upon my experience, I firmly believe that Ms. Char will make an excellent District Family Court Judge.

I supervised Stephanie in her earlier years while she practiced in the District Court, First Circuit. From the start she has been enthusiastic, well-organized, and energetic. After 17 years she has grown into a very experienced and accomplished trial attorney. She has been a team player and talented leader for our organization. Stephanie has become an invaluable member of the Office of the Public Defender. If selected, I have no doubt that she will be invaluable to the Judiciary as well.

Stephanie is very intelligent, hard-working and a good student of the law. She has gained substantial litigation experience working at the Office of the Public Defender that has prepared her to become an outstanding jurist. In addition to carrying a full case load herself, she has further distinguished herself through her administrative and management experience as a supervising attorney.

As a deputy public defender, Stephanie has encountered difficult people, with very challenging circumstances. Nonetheless, from clients to co-workers to opposing counsel, she has always been patient, respectful, ethical, and reasonable—all attributes that would make her a very good Judge with excellent judicial temperament. Furthermore, over the years, Ms. Char has consistently displayed an open mind and extraordinary meticulousness in solving problems and tackling legal issues. For all the reasons above, I offer my strong support for Stephanie Char as District Family Court Judge.

William C. Bagasol, Esq. (Supervising Attorney, Felony Division, Office of the Public Defender.)

From: [Billy Gibson](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Appointment
Date: Saturday, November 14, 2020 1:42:45 PM

To The Senate Judiciary Committee:

Re: Appointment of Stephanie Reiko Sato Char to “District Family Judge”

My Wife and I have known Stephanie since she was a playmate to our children and grew up in our neighborhood. She was always a strong person as she demonstrated in her participation in sports and activities in high school and in college. She spent summers with us when her parents moved to Honolulu for a few years during her college years and we were proud to see her grow through college, law school and her positions as Public Defender.

We have been friends with her mother and father (deceased) for close to 40 years and observed her strict upbringing. We have continued our family relationship with her mother, husband and children.

We hope you will vote favorably on her appointment as District Family Judge as she is well qualified and respected in the community.

Sincerely,

William Gibson , Assistant Professor (Retired) Kauai Community College

Gwendolyn K. Gibson, Secretary, Kauai Prosecuting Attorney (Retired)



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LATE

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: JC1

Testimony in Support of the Nomination of the Stephanie R. S. Char to the Family Court of the Fifth Circuit, State of Hawai'i

Hearing: November 16, 2020

Dear Senators Rhoads, Keohokalole and committee members:

This letter is written in support Ms. Char's nomination to the Family Court of the Fifth Circuit on behalf of Deputy Public Defender Christian Enright. I have had the privilege of working with Ms. Char as a Deputy Public Defender in both the First and Fifth Circuits for over ten years. Specifically, Ms. Char and I worked side by side on Kauai for two years representing indigent criminal defendants in all felony matters charged in the Fifth Circuit. I am prepared to speak to her character both professionally and personally.

As an attorney, Ms. Char is a consummate professional. She was never overwhelmed or unprepared despite a caseload that routinely exceeded 60 pretrial felony cases. Without fail, she treated everyone she encountered with courtesy and respect. In turn, the judges, opposing counsel, clients and her co-workers respect her greatly. She advocates for her clients in an exceedingly effective manner. I have routinely witnessed her anguish over a case, concerned about the outcome for the defendant.

Ms. Char is also a loving wife and the mother of two beautiful children. She takes care of her own mother following her father's passing. She is child of Kauai and she cares deeply for her home and the people who live there.

As the son of a former Family Court judge, I can speak firsthand to the commitment, hard work and compassion necessary to perform the job well. My father did it for many years and it takes a special person to carry the burden of making decisions that permanently impact a struggling family. Ms. Char is just such a person and I unequivocally support her nomination to the bench.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

/s/ Christian Enright

Christian Enright, Deputy Public Defender

TRISHA Y. NAKAMURA, ESQ.
P.O. Box 61619, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96839

LATE

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

Date: November 16, 2020 Hrg: November 16, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

Re: JC 1; Strong Support for the Nomination of Stephanie R.S. Char to the District Court

I share my strongest support of Stephanie Char as a District Court Judge on Kaua`i. I first came to know “Steph” socially before I was an attorney more than fifteen years ago. Even then, I could see her passion for the law and for justice. I later occasionally interfaced with her in my role as a Deputy Public Defender.

COMPASSIONATE, PATIENT, AND SELFLESS

When I was a Deputy Public Defender, I called on Steph for help. Notably, if I had a client who had matters in the Fifth Circuit, I could ask Steph to assist. Despite having a busy schedule and mentoring the young attorneys in the Kaua`i office, Steph would take the time to help me. Whether it be answering numerous questions about the client and potential impacts on their case or simply trying to ascertain what the Fifth Circuit processes entailed, Steph was patient with me and generous with her time. While Steph did this to assist our mutual client, she was helping mold me into being a better practitioner.

Steph’s commitment to the place and service run deep. Her ability to connect with all kinds of people make her a perfect fit for the District Court. She will exercise patience with new and experienced attorneys, parties who appear pro se, and all those who appear. In addition, she will work seamlessly with the courts—extremely important in the court setting.

Mahalo for your consideration.



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

Stephanie R.S. Char
District Family Court Judge of the Fifth Circuit (JC1)

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: Monday, November 16, 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 Stephanie R.S. Char for the position of District Family Court Judge of the Fifth 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.
- Meeting of the President, the Executive Director, and the nominee prior to the scheduled interview of the nominee by the Board.

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Testimony of HSBA

JC1

Hearing on November 16, 2020

Page 2

- 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 Ms. Stephanie R.S. Char on November 9, 2020 to discuss the subcommittee's findings. On November 10th, Ms. Char was interviewed by the HSBA Board of Directors in executive session.

Documentation submitted by Ms. Char 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 Ms. Char 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

Born in California and raised on Kauai, the nominee, Stephanie Char, is looking forward to serving the Garden Island as a District Family Judge for the Fifth Circuit. Ms. Char is filling a new position and will preside over Family Court matters primarily and Small Claims matters.

After spending a significant portion of her legal career at the Office of the Public Defender on Oahu and Kauai, Ms. Char has developed a personal philosophy that some individuals make bad choices which at times have a severe impact on others, and subsequently want to try to contribute positively to society. After years of assisting indigent defendants, Ms. Char would like to serve a greater constituency as a judge.

Ms. Char is known for her straightforward approach in addressing issues and sense of fair play with opposing counsel and clients. As the Managing Attorney for the Kauai Office of the Public Defender, she has developed administrative and time management skills for the cases she continues to handle. Members have commented that she is even-tempered, a critical thinker, and a hard worker who utilizes all available resources to meet responsibilities and expectations.

After the interview of the nominee, which included dialogue and questioning relating to her background, experiences, and reasons for pursuing the position of District Family Court Judge of the Fifth Circuit, the Board of the Hawaii State Bar Association found Ms. Stephanie R.S. Char to be **QUALIFIED** for the position of District Family Court Judge of the Fifth Circuit.

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