

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2

Honolulu, Hawaii

JUN 20 2022

RE: JUD. COM. NO. 2

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-First State Legislature
First Special Session of 2022
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred Judiciary Communication No. 2, submitting for study and consideration the appointment of:

DISTRICT FAMILY COURT OF THE THIRD CIRCUIT

J.C. No. 2 JOANNA E. SOKOLOW,
for a term to expire in 6 years,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Judge Joanna E. Sokolow for service on the District Family Court of the Third Circuit, State of Hawaii.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the appointment of Judge Joanna E. Sokolow from eight individuals. Your Committee received comments on the appointment of Judge Joanna E. Sokolow from the Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association.

The Hawaii State Bar Association Board of Directors (HSBA Board) uses a rating system that considers several criteria to assist the HSBA Board in making a recommendation to your Committee on whether the appointee is "qualified" or "not qualified". Specifically, the criteria the HSBA Board employs is the same criteria found in the American Bar Association's Guidelines for Reviewing Qualifications of Candidates for State Judicial Office. Those guidelines include the following criteria, which are not exclusive: integrity, diligence, legal knowledge and ability, professional experience, temperament, financial responsibility,



public service, health, and ability to perform the responsibilities and duties required of the position for which the applicant has been appointed. Upon review of the established criteria, the HSBA Board found the appointee to be qualified for the position of District Family Court Judge of the Third Circuit.

Judge Sokolow attended the University of Wisconsin - Madison where she received a Bachelor of Arts with distinction in International Affairs and a Bachelor of Arts with honors in French. She received her Juris Doctor from Georgetown University Law Center where she made the Dean's list, was admitted to practice as a Student Attorney for Georgetown Juvenile Justice Clinic, and received the Juvenile Justice Clinic Alumni Public Service Award. Judge Sokolow has been licensed to practice law in the State of Hawaii since 2006.

Since July 2021, Judge Sokolow has served as a Per Diem Judge for the District Family Court of the Third Circuit where she has presided over criminal, family court, and temporary restraining order cases.

Judge Sokolow also currently works as an attorney with Sokolow & Gibson, LLP where she represents indigent defendants in court-appointed cases ranging from petty misdemeanors to felonies. Previously, Judge Sokolow worked as an attorney for the Children's Law Project of Hawai'i where she advocated for at-risk, low-income youth through adoptions and guardianships; acted as Guardian Ad Litem in abuse and neglect cases and contested divorce, custody, and restraining order matters; and acted as defense counsel for juveniles accused of law violations in Family Court.

Judge Sokolow also previously worked as a Deputy Public Defender for the Office of the Public Defender, State of Hawaii, where she provided criminal defense for indigent persons and was responsible for the Kona and Waimea Juvenile Delinquency calendars, Family Court Criminal calendars, Juvenile Drug Court, Waimea Traffic, Veterans Treatment Court, and involuntary hospitalization cases. Judge Sokolow additionally served as an attorney for the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii for almost ten years where she represented low-income clients in a wide range of civil actions and was the Managing Attorney for the Kailua-Kona office during the latter part of her tenure.

Judge Sokolow has been an active participant and volunteer in the legal community throughout her career and has demonstrated her



commitment to serving the public. She currently serves as a Commissioner for the Access to Justice Commission and Chair for the Commission's Committee on Initiatives to Enhance Civil Access to Justice. She is also currently a member of the Per Diem Judges Education Committee, is active within the Hawaii State Bar Association, serves as a volunteer for the Kids First Program and on the Board of Directors for Family Support Hawaii, and is a participant in the West Hawaii Keiki Coalition and Hui Laulima.

Testimony submitted in support of Judge Sokolow's appointment commends her compassion, legal intellect, and dedication to the community. Testimony further indicates that during her tenure as a Per Diem Judge for the District Family Court of the Third Circuit, she has demonstrated a superb judicial temperament and the ability to treat all individuals with whom she interacts with fairness, dignity, and respect. Numerous testifiers also praise her integrity, as well as her intelligence and keen understanding of the law.

Your Committee finds that, based on the testimony submitted on her behalf, responses to questions asked by the members of your Committee, and your Committee's review of information about her and her qualifications, Judge Joanna E. Sokolow has the experience, dedication, and other competencies to be a District Family Court Judge of the Third Circuit, and she has the legal expertise, integrity, and demeanor to fully and faithfully discharge the duties associated with that judicial office.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the appointee, has found the appointee to be qualified for the position to which appointed and recommends that the Senate consent to the appointment.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,




KARL RHOADS, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-First Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Judiciary
JDC
Consent

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| Gov. Msg./Jud. Com. No.:* <i>JC 2</i> | Committee Referral: <i>JDC</i> | Date: <i>06-20-2022</i> | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision | | | | |
| The Recommendation is: | | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent 2347 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Consent 2349 | | | | |
| Members | Aye | Aye (WR) | Nay | Excused |
| RHOADS, Karl (C) | // | | | |
| KEOHOKALOLE, Jarrett (VC) | // | | | |
| ACASIO, Laura | // | | | |
| GABBARD, Mike | // | | | |
| KIM, Donna Mercado | | | | / |
| LEE, Chris | // | | | |
| FEVELLA, Kurt | // | | | |
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| TOTAL | <i>6</i> | <i>-</i> | <i>-</i> | <i>1</i> |
| Recommendation: | | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted | | | | |
| Chair's or Designee's Signature: | | | | |
|  | | | | |
| Distribution: | | | | |
| Original File with Committee Report | Yellow Clerk's Office | Pink Drafting Agency | Goldenrod Committee File Copy | |

*Only one Message/Communication per Record of Votes