

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1

Honolulu, Hawaii

JUN 26 2024

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
First Special Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 1, submitting for study and consideration the appointment of:

CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

G.M. No. 1 REBECCA COPELAND,
for a term to expire in 10 years,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Judge Rebecca Copeland for service on the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the appointment of Judge Rebecca Copeland from the Governor, Hawaii Women Lawyers, King Kamehameha V Judiciary History Center, and twenty-four individuals.

Your Committee received comments on the appointment of Judge Rebecca Copeland 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.

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Those guidelines include the following criteria, which are not exclusive: integrity, diligence, legal knowledge and ability, professional experience, temperament, financial responsibility, public service, 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 Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Judge Copeland attended Southwest Texas State University where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and graduated magna cum laude. She received her Juris Doctor from the St. Mary's University School of Law, where she was a staff writer and senior associate editor for the St. Mary's Law Journal and participated in the External Advocacy Moot Court Team. Judge Copeland has been licensed to practice law in the State of Hawaii since 2003 though for several years she first practiced in Texas where she was also licensed.

Since 2020, Judge Copeland has served as a District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit where she has adjudicated cases for temporary restraining orders, paternities, adoptions, guardianships, involuntary hospitalizations, Assisted Community Treatment orders, juvenile criminal matters, and Child Protective orders. Previously, Judge Copeland worked at her own law firm from 2012 to 2020, focusing on family and civil litigation, and served as a Per Diem District Judge for the District Court of the First Circuit from 2016 to 2020 where she adjudicated criminal and civil cases including civil traffic infractions, petty misdemeanors, misdemeanors, temporary restraining orders and injunctions, summary possession, small claims, and regular claims. Prior to having her own practice, Judge Copeland was an associate at Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert where she focused on litigation and appeals.

Judge Copeland has also worked as an Adjunct Professor for the St. Mary's Law School, where she taught legal research and writing for five years. Additionally, she was an Adjunct Professor at the William S. Richardson School of Law, where she taught Legal Practice II, and at the Texas A&M University San Antonio System Center, where she taught Constitutional Law. Judge Copeland has been an active member of the legal community including serving on the Hawai'i Access to Justice Commission since 2011. She also was a member of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association for five years and founded the Hawaii



State Bar Association's Appellate Section. She received the Hawaii State Bar Association's President's Award in 2016 and was the Hawaii Women Lawyers Outstanding Woman Lawyer of the Year in 2018.

Testimony submitted in support of Judge Copeland's appointment commends her commitment to equality, inclusion, and fairness. Testimony further indicates that during her time as a judge for the Family Court of the First Circuit, she has shown the necessary professional and personal temperament and demeanor. Numerous testifiers also praise her transparency, honesty, preparedness, and trustworthiness.

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 Rebecca Copeland has the knowledge, dedication, and other competencies to be a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit, and possesses the legal expertise and integrity 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,

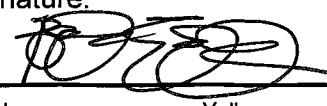


KARL RHOADS, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Second Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Judiciary
JDC
Consent

Gov. Msg./Jud. Com. No.:* GM 1	Committee Referral: JDC	Date: 06/26/24		
<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)	✓			
GABBARD, Mike (VC)				✓
ELEFANTE, Brandon J.C.	✓			
KANUHA, Dru Mamo	✓			
KEOHOKALOPE, Jarrett	✓			
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A.				✓
AWA, Brenton			✓	
TOTAL	4	0	1	2
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
				
Distribution:				
Original	Yellow	Pink	Goldenrod	
File with Committee Report	Clerk's Office	Drafting Agency	Committee File Copy	

*Only one Message/Communication per Record of Votes