

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Testimony of
Josh Green, M.D.
Governor, State of Hawai'i

Before the
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Monday, June 24, 2024
10:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016 and Videoconference

In consideration of
Governor's Message No. 4

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Governor's Message No. 4, the appointment of Steven Nichols as a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit of the State of Hawai'i.

Mr. Nichols is currently in private practice operating the Law Office of Steven R Nichols, primarily practicing in Criminal Defense, where he has represented individuals charged with serious felony charges all the way down to traffic and petty misdemeanor charges and has also begun to expand his practice by representing Petitioners and Responders in District and Family Court Temporary Restraining Order Hearings. In addition to his private practice, Mr. Nichols also serves as a Per Diem Family Court Judge in the First Circuit presiding over cases involving divorces, paternity, adoptions, guardianships, and more. Mr. Nichols's prior experience also includes two decades serving in various roles with the Office of the Public Defender and serving as a law clerk for the Honorable Dexter Del Rosario of the First Circuit.

Mr. Nichols earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, William S. Richardson School of Law and earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in History also from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

I am confident that Steven Nichols has the experience and knowledge necessary to serve the State well as a Circuit Court Judge for the State of Hawai'i and am pleased to offer my full support of his nomination.

Mahalo for your consideration.

LARS ROBERT ISAACSON
ATTORNEY AT LAW

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June 17, 2024

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chairperson
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: GM4 (Confirmation of Steven R. Nichols as Circuit Court Judge)

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

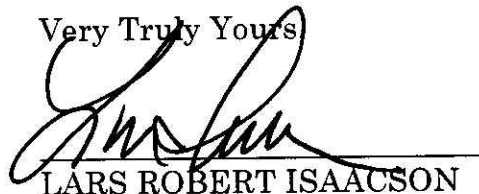
I write to you in strong support of the confirmation of Steven R. Nichols for the position of Circuit Court Judge of the First Judicial District.

I am a solo practitioner and have been a member of the Hawai'i Bar since 1990. My practice concentrates in state and federal criminal defense. I have appeared in the District, Family and Circuit Courts, have handled appeals to our Hawaii and federal appellate courts. I believe I am very familiar with the Courts of the First Circuit.

Because Mr. Nichols served with the First Circuit Public Defender's office for many years, he will be able to hit the ground running as someone familiar with the rules of the court and with many of the attorneys that will appear before him. He also has a very even disposition which will be greatly appreciated by parties that appear in his court.

For these reasons, I support the nomination of Mr. Nichols. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Very Truly Yours



LARS ROBERT ISAACSON



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June 20, 2024

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chairperson
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 Beretania Street, Conference Room 016
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: GM-4: Steven Nichols for Circuit Court of the First Circuit, Judge – In Support

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

I am writing in strong support of the confirmation of Steven Nichols for the position of Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit.

I am a solo practitioner concentrating in criminal defense who has appeared in the District, Family, Circuit, and Federal Courts, on a regular basis over the past 25 years. I am very familiar with the histories, procedures, and personalities of the Courts of the First Circuit, as well as moderately familiar with our other three judicial circuits.

Mr. Nichols is one of the brightest, quickest, and most competent attorneys that I have ever met. He has impeccable academic credentials, as well as years of practical “in the trenches” experience as a Public Defender and Private Attorney. Public service needs honest, talented, and caring individuals like Mr. Nichols.

Mr. Nichols is an individual who has always treated others with respect and fairness. He is levelheaded and compassionate. He possesses the best of the traits that we hope for ourselves, and for those in whom our community entrusts with power. I trust him as a friend and colleague, and believe that our community needs and deserves him on the bench.

I believe that the opportunity to have such a qualified candidate for the position of Circuit Court Judge should not be passed up. Please feel free to call upon me if you have any questions or concerns.

Very Truly Yours,

/s/ Richard H.S. Sing

Richard H.S. Sing



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Jai W. Keep-Barnes
Sarah A. Mau
Sharon Paris
Ciarra B. Sapigao
Ivana P. Tran

Jason N. Baba
(1957-2001)

**HAWAII STATE SENATE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Conference Room 016
State Capital
10:30 AM**

June 24, 2024

Subject: GM4 – Confirmation of Judicial Nominee Steven R. Nichols

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Love. I am a Partner with the law firm of Lung Rose Voss & Wagnild and have been in private practice in Hawaii for 18 years. I am writing to you in **strong support** of the confirmation of Governor Green's nomination of Steven R. Nichols to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

Mr. Nichols would be a valuable asset to the First Circuit Court bench. I have known Mr. Nichols for more than 25 years, and I have nothing but the highest regard for him both personally and professionally. Mr. Nichols is dedicated to his clients, and to the practice of law at a high level and with the outmost professionalism. As a Public Defender for almost 20 years, Mr. Nichols has a passion for ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to present their case so that decisions are made based upon the fair representation of all parties present.

Mr. Nichols' commitment to public services also extends outside of his profession. As a devoted husband and father to 3 girls, Mr. Nichols has dedicated countless hours to Hawaii's public schools as a PTO officer for several years, and to our community's youth as a coach to his daughters' soccer and basketball teams.

I whole heartedly provide my support for this Committee's confirmation of Governor Green's nomination of Mr. Nichols to the First Circuit Court bench. I am confident he will be a valuable addition to the Judiciary.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this matter.

Sincerely,

Sarah M. Love

Date: June 19, 2024

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: GM4, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit,
State of Hawaii, Gubernatorial Nominee, Steven Richard Nichols

Hearing: Monday, June 24, 2024, 10:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016 and Videoconference
415 South Beretania Street

It is my honor to write this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Gubernatorial Nominee Steven Richard Nichols to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. I worked with Mr. Nichols at the State Office of the Public Defender for over 16 years. He is a colleague, a mentor, and a friend.

Mr. Nichols possesses extensive knowledge of criminal law. While at the State Office of the Public Defender, he conducted approximately 60 jury trials. He defended individuals at trial accused of such crimes as murder and sexual assault. Mr. Nichols was one of the most experienced trial attorneys in our office and he freely shared his knowledge and expertise with others. He took the time to train, advise, and mentor junior attorneys. He provided feedback to junior attorneys during office jury trial exercises. He also took the time to check on the welfare of junior attorneys. He made it clear that anyone could come to him for assistance at any time.

Though Mr. Nichols possesses many strengths and characteristics that would make him an outstanding judge, his greatest trait is his temperament. Mr. Nichols is fair and respectful in his dealings with everyone he encounters. He treats people with dignity no matter the individual's status. I have never witnessed Mr. Nichols behave or speak inappropriately. I have never witnessed Mr. Nichols lose his composure or temper towards anyone. He remains calm in situations where others do not. He is the model of judicial temperament.

Mr. Nichols is a person of great character and integrity. I have never observed him act to the contrary. He has my respect. He is one of the few attorneys I confide in when I have problems at work. He is a great counsel to me. I trust him unequivocally.

Mr. Nichols is one of the most encouraging, uplifting, and supportive individuals I have met. He has no ego. He does not belittle or demean individuals. He strongly believed in the idea of one team at the Office of the Public Defender. This belief was evident by his attitude, words, and behavior towards everyone in the office. He sought me out at each stage of my advancement at the Office of the Public Defender to offer his advice and support to me. He let me know countless times his door was always open if I needed anything. His willingness to help attorneys with cases without judging the attorney's skill or knowledge level was invaluable to the

professional development of junior attorneys and was instrumental in maintaining good morale and harmony in our office.

Because of his legal acumen, interpersonal skills, and character, Mr. Nichols was promoted to Felony Division Supervisor during his tenure at the Office of the Public Defender. Even with a position of greater responsibility and authority, Mr. Nichols remained the same caring and thoughtful individual, we came to admire and respect. He remained concerned about the welfare of others and worked to remove impediments to our effectiveness as deputy public defenders.

Again, I strongly support the confirmation of Gubernatorial Nominee Steven Richard Nichols as judge to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. If selected, Mr. Nichols would be a positive reflection of the Hawaii State Judiciary. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony in support of Gubernatorial Nominee Steven Richard Nichols.

Respectfully,

/S/OKECHUKWU AMADI

Okechukwu "Okie" Amadi
Deputy Public Defender
State of Hawaii

I am honored to provide this testimony in strong support of Steven Nichols for the judicial position of First Circuit Court Judge. I have had the privilege of working alongside Steve for many years, and I am confident in his exceptional qualifications and unwavering commitment to justice.

Steve has served as a public defender with unparalleled dedication and integrity throughout a career spanning over twenty years. It is no doubt that his tireless advocacy for the underrepresented and steadfast commitment to upholding the principles of justice has made a profound impact on countless lives.

All told, Steve possesses a deep understanding of the law, matched by a compassionate and empathetic approach to legal representation -- his ability to navigate complex legal challenges with both intellectual rigor and human compassion is truly commendable.

In addition to his legal acumen, Steve has also mentored many young attorneys at the Office of the Public Defender, instilling valuable knowledge and deep respect for the ethical practice of law. Steve's selfless mentorship underscores his dedication to the betterment of our legal system in the State of Hawaii.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support the nomination of Steven Nichols for the position of First Circuit Court Judge. His extensive experience at the Office of the Public Defender, combined with his profound sense of justice and outstanding personal qualities, make him an ideal candidate for the judiciary. I am confident that Steve will bring integrity, fairness, and a deep commitment to justice to the bench, and will serve our community with distinction.

Thank you for considering Steve Nichols for this critical role. I am confident that his appointment will be a significant asset to our judicial system and to the community they will serve.

Respectfully,

Myles S. Breiner

JON N. IKENAGA
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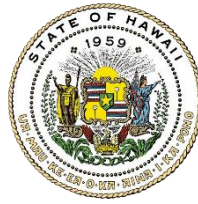
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June 23, 2024

**TO: Chair Karl Rhoads
Vice Chair Mike Gabbard
Honorable Committee Members**

**FROM: Jon N. Ikenaga
Public Defender, State of Hawaii**

**RE: GM 4: CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE CIRCUIT
COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT, STATE OF HAWAII,
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, STEVEN NICHOLS
June 24, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Honorable Committee Members,

I would like to offer my strong support for the consideration and confirmation to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit for Gubernatorial Nominee Steven R. Nichols.

I worked with Mr. Nichols from August 2003 until he left the Office of the Public Defender in ___ 2023. Mr. Nichols left the office as a supervisor in the Felony Section after having moved through the various sections as a trial attorney. Prior to his promotion to supervisor, Mr. Nichols was a senior felony trial attorney handling the most difficult cases and challenging clients in the circuit court.

Throughout my years at the Office of the Public Defender I have had the opportunity to interact with numerous judges in the district, family, circuit and appellate courts. My experience in working with judges at all levels has given me significant insight into the qualities of a good judge – Mr. Nichols possesses all of those qualities.

One of the most important qualities for a judge is judicial temperament. In all his interactions with outside parties, clients, opposing counsel and the judiciary, Mr. Nichols has exhibited patience, open-mindedness, courtesy, tact, understanding, compassion, humility and common sense. As a senior felony attorney, Mr. Nichols worked on the most serious cases with the most difficult clients and always did so with compassion, integrity and patience.

Another important quality is intelligence. As an appellate attorney and the previous supervisor of the Appellate Section of the Office of the Public Defender I had the opportunity to work with most of the trial attorneys statewide at some point in their careers with the office. Mr. Nichols would always keep abreast of current caselaw and had an excellent legal mind and an acuity for recognizing and analyzing legal and factual issues.

Mr. Nichols' personal and professional ethics, a critical quality for a judge, are also beyond reproach. As a deputy public defender, Mr. Nichols was required to provide his client with constitutionally required zealous advocacy and always did so within the boundaries of professional ethics. Mr. Nichols never cut corners or compromised his personal or professional integrity in the course of his representation of clients.

Mr. Nichols also possesses the courage and integrity required of a judge. Judges must often do what the law requires even though the legally-correct decision is not a popular one. In making their decisions, judges must not be influenced by identity, race, gender, political status, wealth or relationship of the parties or lawyers before the judge. As a criminal defense attorney, Mr. Nichols often had to pursue an unpopular course of action but did so because he was legally and ethically required to do so. Mr. Nichols was never influenced by the personal or social characteristics of his clients. Mr. Nichols had the courage and integrity to provide zealous, competent representation to his clients in conformance with the law and was never influenced by improper considerations.

There are many other characteristics which good judges must possess such as experience, education, a willingness to work hard, the ability to communicate orally and in writing and civil and professional responsibility. As evidenced by his resume and experience, Mr. Nichols possesses all of these qualities.

I unequivocally support Mr. Nichols and respectfully ask that this committee confirm his nomination as a judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

To: Senate Judiciary Committee; Chair Karl Rhoads; Vice Chair Mike Gabbard; Brandon Elefante; Joy San Buenaventura; and Brenton Awa

From: Scott Spallina

Re: Support of judicial nominee Steven Nichols

I readily give my support for Steven Nichols to join the bench as a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit. As a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for over 25 years, I have had the opportunity to have work against Mr. Nichols in his capacity as a Deputy Public Defender on numerous cases.

Mr. Nichols has always demonstrated a sincere earnest in representing his clients competently. His judgement in how to proceed with cases, as well as his arguments and reasoning with respect to the applicable laws and rules involved has always been sound. I have never seen him treat his opposing counsels, judges he appeared before, or judicial staff with anything other than respect.

I am confident he will make a fine addition to the bench as a Circuit Court Judge.

Sincerely,

/s/ Scott Spallina
Scott Spallina

Testimony Titiimaea N. Ta'ase
IN SUPPORT

GM4 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit,
State of Hawai'i, Gubernatorial Nominee,
STEVEN NICHOLS, for a term to expire in 10 years.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

June 22, 2024

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong **SUPPORT** of Governor's Message 4 and ask that you confirm Mr. Steven Nichols to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

I am writing in my individual capacity, but I am currently a Deputy Public Defender (DPD). In his time as my co-worker and colleague at the Office of the Public Defender, Mr. Nichols served as a mentor to me and helped me to develop in my career as a litigator. As an attorney, he is skilled, knowledgeable, and effective. In his time as my direct supervisor, he was patient, compassionate, and dedicated. All of those attributes and all of his adeptness make him an ideal candidate for a judgeship in the First Circuit Court.

Aside from being a tremendously talented attorney, Mr. Nichols is also a good father, husband, and citizen. He volunteers his time with youth coaching a mock trial team, and has spent many of his free hours providing free legal services through the Judiciary's Access to Justice Program.

I have no doubt that Mr. Nichols will be an asset to the Judiciary and that he will continue to be a faithful servant of the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Titiimaea N. Ta'ase

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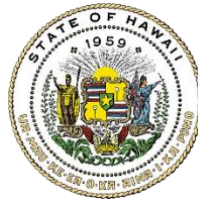
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STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

June 23, 2024

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Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

GM3: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NOMINATION OF STEVEN NICHOLS

Dear Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair Gabbard and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of Steven Nichol's judicial nomination for the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. I have known Steven for many years, having first met him when I was a law clerk in 2006. Starting in 2007, I had the opportunity to work alongside him at the Office of the Public Defender. Since then, I have had numerous opportunities to observe Steven appear in court, interact with clients, and represent criminal defendants in jury trials. I have always admired his preparation, his professionalism, and his commitment to the practice of law.

When I first began my career as a Deputy Public Defender, Steven was already a senior attorney in the felony division of the Office. He consistently mentored and helped me and the less-experienced attorneys in the Office. In 2009, Steven served as a second chair for my first jury trial and his patience, support and leadership was invaluable. I have since had the opportunity to second chair several new attorneys in their first jury trials and I always reflect to my experience with Steve and have tried to follow his example. His mentorship throughout my legal career has been invaluable. I will always consider him an integral part of helping me become the attorney I am and continue to strive to be.

Having appeared before countless Judges throughout my own career, I believe Steve has all the qualities a Judge should possess. Aside from his impressive legal knowledge, he has the ideal temperament to successfully handle a challenging Circuit Court calendar. I am confident he will be fair, reasoned, and thoughtful about every decision he is tasked with making, while treating all parties with the respect they deserve.

Steven is an ideal candidate for the position he has been nominated for. I have no doubt he will bring his tireless work ethic and commitment to the practice of law to his service on the Judiciary. He will make an excellent judge and he has my full support.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on his nomination.

Sincerely,
/s/ Hayley Y.C. Cheng
Hayley Y.C. Cheng



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DEFENDER
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Website: <https://hi.fd.org>

Salina M. Kanai
Federal Public Defender
Salina_Kanai@fd.org

To: Members of the Senate Confirmation Hearing for GM4:
Re: Steven R. Nichols, Nominee for Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit
Date: June 18, 2024

I write in support of my friend and former colleague, Steven R. Nichols, who is a nominee for Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit. I have known Steve for twenty years, since 2004 back when I was a Deputy Public Defender alongside him for five years.

Having appeared in front of dozens and dozens of judges over my two-decade career, mostly as a public defender in both state and federal court, I believe I have some basis to know what makes a good judge. A good judge that is just, respected by the public and attorneys, and who can move a calendar, are the ones who have compassion, open minds, an ability to quickly grasp the law, and most of all, a firm understanding of how a trial works. It does not matter so much whether a judge comes from a public service background in criminal law, like Steve, or a private background in civil; judges who were trial attorneys by and large simply tend to make good trial judges.

And it is obvious from Steve's resume that he is a remarkably experienced trial attorney. He spent most of his career at the state public defenders. State PDs are some of the best trial attorneys that you will never hear about, most shunning the spotlight and doing an underpaid and underappreciated job. While Steve has been in private practice for a short time now, he still represents indigent clients. He appears day in and day out in state court, fighting to defend the constitutional rights of our citizens.

I will focus on what might not be so apparent from his resume. Steve is one of the most compassionate individuals I have ever met. Many attorneys dislike their clientele or get burned out by their clients' problems. Steve is not like that, even after all these years. He is easygoing, calm and even-tempered, though when he witnesses injustice, he fights hard to correct it. I know that clients always feel like they have a respected and tough advocate in their corner, and they are right.

Steve's resume is limited to mainly criminal cases (although he was recently selected to be a per diem judge). I am sure that is one of your concerns. Steve would have a learning curve with the civil cases, of course, but he is a quick study, bright, curious and unafraid to ask for help. And, the breadth of experience Steve has had in his long tenure at

the Public Defender's would serve him well as a judge. Circuit Court calendars are intense. Trials are grueling. Cases need to get disposed of, but justice needs to be served at the same time. Litigants should be treated with courtesy and respect, even when there is a time crunch, which happens often in court. Steve, as a former DPD with a demanding caseload, can triage and juggle cases exceptionally. He did so with compassion, grace and fairness.

Steve would be an asset to our judiciary. I thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salina M. Kanai', written in a cursive style.

Salina M. Kanai
Federal Public Defender
District of Hawaii

June 17, 2024

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard

I am writing this letter in support of Circuit Court Judge Nominee, Steven R. Nichols. I had the privilege of knowing Steve for over 24 years, beginning with our time together at the William S. Richardson School of Law. I continued to know and work alongside Steve through clerkships at the Circuit Court and in careers at the Office of the Public Defender. We are currently both in private practice and remain close friends and colleagues.

Steve is an elite trial attorney and consistently demonstrated qualities that make him exceptionally well-suited to be a Circuit Court Judge. His extensive experience as a litigator would translate well onto the bench. Steve's leadership within our legal community is evident not only through his accomplishments but also through his role as a mentor at the Office of the Public Defender, where he generously shared his experience with other attorneys. One of Steve's greatest strengths as a person, and as a lawyer, is that his heart is always in the right place. I can say wholeheartedly that Steve possesses the intelligence, strong work ethic, and moral integrity that would make him an outstanding Judge.

Sincerely,

/S/ Alan J. Komagome

Alan J. Komagome
Law Office of Alan J Komagome, LLLC

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/17/2024 1:59:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alena Kaeo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: My name is Alena Kaeo and I'm in support of Mr. Steven Nichols. I support him because he is humble, caring, attentive and kind. As an office assistant, he treated me with the same level of respect he showed attorneys in our office. He saw me as a person and not as my position. Mr. Nichols treated me with dignity and made me feel like a valued member of the PD office. Mahalo!

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/17/2024 2:14:51 PM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amber Boll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: I first met Steve when I was a law clerk. He was a high-level PD whereas I was fresh out of law school. From the first encounter with Steve, he was professional, kind, knowledgeable, and gently guided as I learned how to be a law clerk. He deeply cared for his clients and fought tooth and nail, yet always respectfully. Even when everything would seem to be going wrong, he would stay calm under pressure and patient with those around him. After my clerkship, I was lucky enough to join the Office of the Public Defender. Steve was always encouraging. It didn't matter that I had decades less experience than him, he always made me feel like he valued my opinion and thoughts. This courtesy and leadership especially extended when he became felony supervisor. Even though he wasn't my direct supervisor, he made a point to check on everyone in the office. He listened to criticism, offered support when needed, and took initiative to propel the office forward. His calm and patient demeanor, as well as extensive knowledge of the courtroom and law, will make him an excellent judge.

Taryn Tomasa
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Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference
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415 South Beretania Street
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June 17, 2024

Re: GM 4: Letter in support of judicial nominee Steven R. Nichols

Chair Rhoad, Vice-Chair Gabbard and Committee Members:

This letter is in support of the nomination of STEVEN R. NICHOLS to the circuit court bench. I have known Mr. Nichols for over twenty-two years, both professionally and personally. It is without hesitation that I submit this letter in support of his nomination. Mr. Nichols possesses the character, experience, and demeanor for this demanding judicial position.

In the years that I worked with Mr. Nichols at the Office of the Public Defender, he showed dedication to his work and zealously advocated for his clients. In his position as a senior trial attorney, Mr. Nichols handled difficult cases, involving the most serious charges and high profile cases. He was not only well experienced in trials but a resource of knowledge in the office. Mr. Nichols also presented and mentored at the annual Office of the Public Defender seminar.

Mr. Nichols is also a devoted husband and father. Both in and out of the courtroom he practices compassion and respect. His background and his relatable personality would be an asset to the Judiciary. Mr. Nichols has the ability to effectively communicate with individuals from all walks of life. Moreover, his experience would enable him effectively resolve cases through compromise or trial.

As a citizen and a practicing attorney, I believe that Hawaii deserves the best judges. Based on my experience as an appellate attorney, a trial attorney in both circuit and family court and now the district court supervisor, I know that a successful judge must possess not only an understanding of the law and rules, but have the judicial demeanor and the trial experience to enable the court to confidently rule with judicial decisiveness and compassion in a fast paced and emotional trial setting. A number of the current judges lack trial experience, judicial demeanor and they are unable to make a reasoned decision based on the law. Mr. Nichols has the experience, demeanor and dedication to fill these voids. He will be a successful and invaluable asset to the State of Hawaii as a judge.

Very truly yours,



Taryn Tomasa



WENDY HUDSON • ATTORNEY AT LAW
44 N. MARKET STREET, WAILUKU, HI 96793
PH. 808-242-1999 • FAX 808-244-5698
WENDYHUDSONLAW@GMAIL.COM
WENDYHUDSONLAW.COM

June 19, 2024

Re: Steve Nichols - First Circuit Judge Nomination

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

I'm writing to recommend and enthusiastically support Steve Nichols for First Circuit Court Judge. I've known Steve over 20 years and have appreciated his growth as an attorney throughout that time. He is a perfect choice for this position as he is thoughtful, compassionate, honest, full of integrity and has consistently taken on difficult and challenging cases throughout his career. He has a strong work ethic and is quite humble.

He would be an asset to the bench would serve the Court diligently and well, if chosen.

Mahalo,

/s/ Wendy A. Hudson

Wendy Hudson

June 17, 2024

TO: Senate Judiciary Committee
RE: Judicial Selection Steven R. Nichols

I write in strong support of Steven Nichols' appointment to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

I first met Mr. Nichols in 2014 when I became a law clerk for the Honorable Dean E. Ochiai. What immediately struck me about Mr. Nichols was the kindness and patience that he showed to a young law clerk who was just beginning to figure out the job. After becoming a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in 2015, I had many cases with Mr. Nichols as the opposing counsel. Mr. Nichols is an intelligent and zealous advocate and defends his clients with integrity. Mr. Nichols is extremely experienced and knowledgeable about the law and has always treated opposing counsel with respect and fairness. He treats all people that he comes into contact with the same amount of kindness, compassion, and dignity.

The respect that I and other prosecutors have for Mr. Nichols is a testament to his integrity and temperament. He remains calm and respectful even when things become contentious, which will serve him well as a Judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. Without a doubt, Mr. Nichols will be a great asset to the bench. He is humble, fair, and an extremely dedicated public servant. Without any reservations, I support and recommend Mr. Nichols' appointment to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of Steven R. Nichols

Very Respectfully,

/s/ Leigh M. Okimoto

leighokimoto@gmail.com



William N. Ota | wota@ota-hara.com
Leighton M. Hara | lhara@ota-hara.com

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Phone: (808) 532-1728 | Fax: (808) 532-1729 | ota-hara.com

June 17, 2024

VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION (JDCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Committee on Judiciary

Re: Hearing: Monday, June 24, 2024
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Place: State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

GM4 Submitting for consideration and confirmation of Steven R. Nichols as Judge to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, Gubernatorial Nominee

Dear Senator Rhoads:

Please consider this letter my testimony in support of Steven R. Nichols' confirmation as a Circuit Court Judge for the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

I have been a licensed attorney since 2002 and am in private practice as an attorney specializing in litigation. Since 2009, my practice has focused almost on litigation beginning with the Marr Jones & Wang, LLLP law firm where I was a partner until today. Since 2015, I have also been involved in general litigation matters as a founding partner of Ota & Hara, LLLC.

Mr. Nichols and I met in 1999 during our first year at the William S. Richardson School of Law. From our initial meeting and throughout our years of law school, Mr. Nichols made clear that his goal was to serve the public. His intellect, coupled with his friendly demeanor, immediately made a positive impression on me and I was impressed at how he thrived in such a competitive environment.

During my years of practice, I have had the pleasure of watching Mr. Nichols achieve his goal by rising through the ranks as a deputy public defender, someone who goes to work every day fighting for the rights of people who cannot afford legal representation. He is a fighter and someone who sacrificed for his family to ensure that the rights of his indigent clients are not infringed upon. Mr. Nichols' passion for

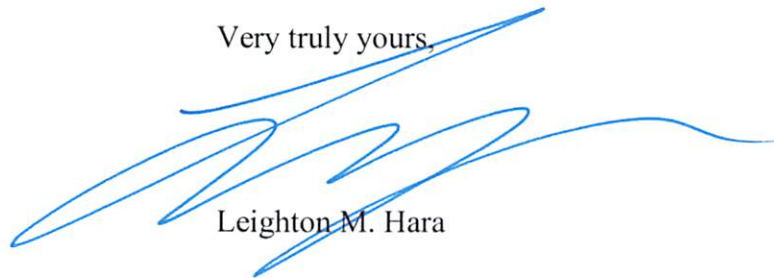
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Committee on Judiciary
June 17, 2024
Page 2

public interest work is balanced by his even-keeled disposition, which will serve him well on the bench.

Mr. Nichols' experience (trial and motions practice), temperament, and demeanor will serve the public well and are qualities which will make for an excellent Judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

It is with great pleasure that I submit this testimony in support of Steven R. Nichols. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leighton M. Hara", is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Leighton M. Hara

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/17/2024 4:18:39 PM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Antoinette Lilley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Aloha, Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express my enthusiastic support for Steve Nichols' nomination to the bench. Throughout my time at the Office of the Public Defender, Steve stood out not just for his excellent work inside the courtroom, but also for his kindness and compassion in everything he does. Steve has the ideal temperament to be a sitting judge. Steve will never be the type of judge who feels the need to belittle others to make himself more impressive. Despite his many years of experience, Steve is incredibly humble. When confronted with a situation where he's not certain of the correct course, Steve won't be afraid to reach out to judges with more seniority to figure out the correct approach. Furthermore, he is patient and will always be willing to provide guidance to younger attorneys and others who are less familiar with our legal system. Steve will treat everyone who enters his courtrooms with respect, regardless of their background, but that doesn't mean that he'll be a pushover. Steve has a strong, practical understanding of what is expected from attorneys, so he'll be able to hold attorneys accountable when they fail to meet that standard. Please confirm Steve Nichols to this position - our Judiciary and the people of our State can only benefit from his appointment to the bench. Best, Antoinette Lilley Deputy Public Defender

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/17/2024 4:44:09 PM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas D. Farrell	Individual	Comments Only	Written Testimony Only

Comments: I do not know Mr. Nichols and therefore am not submitting testimony either in support or opposing his confirmation.

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/18/2024 10:34:51 AM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rafael Renteria	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Dear Chair Rhoads, I write to SUPPORT the nomination of Steve Nichols to serve our community as a judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. In my legal career, I have had the pleasure of knowing Steve since 2010. At that time, Steve was a public defender who frequently appeared before the judge for whom I was clerking. Steve always treated those around him with great respect whether they were his clients, court staff, or prosecutors. He was always held in the highest regard. Later, as I went on to become a prosecutor, Steve's professionalism and amiability never wavered. Although my colleagues and I were on the opposite side of the aisle from Steve, we all held the highest opinion of him. He is a zealous advocate, but is able to achieve great results for his clients while conducting himself with great integrity. If Steve's nomination is approved, the community and the legal profession will benefit from having a person of such stellar character and legal knowledge on the bench. Thank you for your time, Rafael K. Renteria

Louis Michael Ching, Esq.
Attorney At Law

June 18, 2024

Re: Written testimony in support of Judicial Candidate
Steven R. Nichols. Testimony for GM4.

To the Legislature Committee:

I am a licensed private criminal defense attorney for the past 39 years in Honolulu. Without reservations, I am whole heartedly supporting Mr. Steven R. Nichols for a circuit court judgeship. I have personally known Mr. Nichols since he began practicing law twenty years ago. I can share my observations with your committee over those twenty years.

Mr. Nichols is a very diligent, intelligent, thoroughly competent lawyer. He has demonstrated compassion and sympathy and a strong sense of justice and common sense. He is a great family man and father. He has earned an excellent reputation over the many years of his practice. He is consistent and has the correct demeanor and character for a judgeship.

Mr. Nichols will make a great contributing jurist to the fine judges in the circuit courts of Hawaii. Thank you for your consideration and patience.

Mahalo,

L. Michael Ching

Louis Michael Ching, Esq.

4475 Kilauea Avenue

*Telephone: *(808) 392-8727*

Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

Email: Louismichaelching@hotmail.com

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/18/2024 1:29:00 PM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Travis J.L. Stephens, Jr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: June 18, 2024 To: The Senate Committee On Judiciary Re: Mr. Steven R. Nichols Judicial nomination for Circuit Judge, Circuit Court of the First Circuit State of Hawai'i To the Honorable Karl Rhoads, My name is Travis J.L. Stephens, Jr. Prior to retiring in 2017, I practiced law in the State of Hawai'i in excess of thirty years. During this time, I had the opportunity of working with Mr. Steven R. Nichols for approximately fourteen years at the Office of the Public Defender. While working with Mr. Nichols, I was able to observe him as both a mentor and as a senior trial attorney. He excelled in each role. Community service has always been a priority for Mr. Nichols. He does this not for the recognition but to assist in the development of the young men and women within his community. I initially met Mr. Nichols in 1998 when he was coaching my nine year old daughter's basketball team. The manner in which he was able to relate to children much younger than himself and never become impatient impressed me. After spending more time with Mr. Nichols, I suggested that he apply to law school upon completing his undergraduate degree. I was very happy to learn that he had already been accepted into the William S. Richardson School of Law. From very early on I realized with his intelligence and intuitive nature that he would be an asset to the legal community. As a litigant, Mr. Nichols exemplifies what a true professional should be. He is always well prepared whenever he steps into a courtroom. I have also observed Mr. Nichols supervising younger attorneys within the Office of the Public Defender with patience, guidance and understanding. A trait that will bode well as a Circuit Court Judge. I can state that Mr. Nichols is highly respected within the legal community for his high character, honesty and integrity. Anyone who would say anything to the contrary simply does not know him. It is my pleasure, without hesitation, to offer my support for Mr. Steven R. Nichols being appointed to the position of Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit, State of Hawai'i. Sincerely, Travis J.L. Stephens, Jr.

June 19, 2024

RE: Testimony in Support of Steven Nichols

Aloha Chairman Rhoads and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Steven Nichols for Circuit Court Judge. I worked with Steve at the Office of the Public Defender for about 16 years, but I've known him for over 24 years because we first met during law school at UH. Steve is kind, friendly, calm, patient, humble, funny, and hard working. Over the years I've liked and admired Steve as a fellow student, as a colleague, and as my supervisor.

Steve tackles incredibly complex cases with perseverance and aplomb. I once assisted him as he prepared for a very difficult murder trial with complicated (and novel) DNA issues. Working with Steve to plan and draft the pretrial motions and sitting in on his meetings with potential DNA experts demonstrated to me how quickly Steve can get up to speed on difficult legal issues. When he was promoted to felony supervisor he took his trial caseload with him, so he had to do two full-time jobs. Somehow, he managed to handle both his clients and his full-time administrative duties without any errors or slippage. When he left my office to work in private practice, it was a tough blow. He was a great mentor to our younger attorneys, and he really added a lot to the morale of the office.

I believe Steve has the intellect, work ethic, and demeanor to be a terrific Judge. His calm and friendly attitude will reflect well on the Judiciary, and he will be eager to assist young attorneys still learning the ropes by educating and molding them, without being harsh or overbearing. I expect that members of the public who appear in his courtroom will always be treated with patience and respect. I expect that Defendants sentenced by him will never be left wondering if he acted out of anger or capriciousness, even if they don't get the sentence they wanted. I expect that Plaintiffs and Complaining Witnesses will always feel like they were treated fairly by Judge Nichols and that they had their day in court, even if the jury returns a verdict that makes them unhappy. I expect many great things from Steve on the bench, but above all, I expect fair and just rulings.

Please confirm Steve's nomination.

Sincerely,

Sat K. Freedman

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/19/2024 10:24:08 AM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Bento	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: I am writing in strong support of the judicial nomination of Steve Nichols to the First Circuit Court bench. I believe that Steve will be a great asset to the judiciary due to his legal experience, humble character and professionalism. I have worked with Steve for many years and have seen him handle difficult cases, clients and situations with patience, caring and expertise. I believe that he will bring all of these attributes with him to the bench, where will serve with distinction. Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment on this nomination.

Law Office of Donovan A. Odo, LLC

PO BOX 939 'AIEA, HI 96701 | (808) 554-3490 | donovan.a.odo@gmail.com

June 17, 2024

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

**Dear Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair:**

I write in support of the nomination of Steven Nichols for the position of Circuit Court Judge. I have known Steve for over 17 years, starting as a law-clerk extern for the retired Honorable Michael Town. At that time, all I knew of Steve was he was a good attorney, and treated everyone in the courtroom with kindness and respect (even the interns).

In the years since, I leaned on Steve as a mentor in the Office of the Public Defender. He was always welcoming with good advice without judgment. In more recent times, Steve and I became contemporaries and friends. We tried one of the most high-profile murder trials not once, but twice. Working so closely with Steve taught me three things. First, I got a glimpse at the tremendous work-ethic up close, day in and day out. Second, he possesses excellent knowledge of procedure, evidentiary rules, and strategy. Finally, he was the same kind and respectful person I met over a decade earlier.

There is a genuineness to Steve that will suit the judiciary, and state. Circuit Court is a place where people's lives are on the line. I have no doubt Steve will rule fairly, clearly, and with compassion. He will serve the judiciary, and state well.

Sincerely,

Donovan A. Odo

[Disclosure: these comments are submitted as a professional colleague, and do not represent any official position of my current employer, the State of Hawaii, Department of the Attorney General].

Thank you for allowing me to submit comments in strong support of Steven R. Nichols (“Steve”) as Circuit Court Judge. I have no doubt that Steve is not only qualified to be a judge, but that he will be a great judge for many years to come.

I have had the privilege of knowing Steve since the early 2000s. During those years, my first job as an attorney was with the Public Defender’s office, an extremely high volume, high stress job. During those early years, I was doing district court cases and Steve was already doing felony cases. The Public Defender’s office is divided into two sections on opposite ends of each other. On one far end is where the felony attorneys’ offices are, and the other far end - the district court attorneys. Steve was the ONLY felony attorney who would regularly come to the district court attorneys’ side and check on us. He would regularly stop in my doorway and ask, “How are you doing?” “Everything okay?” “You need any help?” “Have any questions?” I cannot overstate what this selfless gesture meant to me as a new attorney. Steve was always there for other people.

As the years went by and I, too, became a felony Deputy Public Defender, I learned two more things about Steve. First, that he is an outstanding trial attorney. And second, that even many prosecutors expressed to me their respect and admiration of Steve, not only for his trial skills and intelligence, but also for his good character.

Steve is an outstanding choice for the State of Hawaii.

David L. Williams
dlwonoahu@gmail.com
(808) 554-7132

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FAX: (808) 523-9137

June 19, 2024

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chairperson
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 Beretania Street, Conference Room 016
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: GM-4: Steven Nichols for Circuit Court of the First Circuit, Judge – In Support

I am writing in support of the confirmation of Steven Nichols to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit . I have known Mr. Nichols since I began my career as an attorney at the Office of the Public Defender in 2008 and have worked closely with him since 2012. Recently, Mr. Nichols and I left the Office of the Public Defender and both opened private practices alongside one another. Over the course of these many years, I have come to know Mr. Nichols very well both in a personal and professional capacity.

As an attorney, Mr. Nichols is an exceptionally competent and diligent litigator. He is always patient and routinely navigates stressful and even hostile situations with extreme professionalism. I have heard it said that experienced public defenders are “the best defense attorneys money can’t buy” and Mr. Nichols certainly embodies this sentiment. I believe these qualities would make him an excellent judge. I am hard-pressed to think of an individual who would possess a more appropriate judicial temperament than Mr. Nichols and it is my opinion that our community can firmly place our trust in him.

Personally, I have tremendous respect for Steve. He has been a great friend and a mentor over the years. He is a loving husband and father to his three daughters. He has been a source of support and advice as I attempt to navigate my own journey through fatherhood. If he is chosen for this opportunity, I will be very proud and happy for him but I will also be sad to see him go.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
/s/ Christian Enright
Christian Enright

June 20, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Rodney Tateyama and I strongly endorse the appointment of Steven Nichols to serve as a Circuit Court Judge in the State of Hawaii.

I've experienced Mr. Nichols' legal expertise, compassion and personal character. He exhibited a sincere and calm demeanor throughout my ordeal. He explained my situation and my options in an intelligent and understandable manner and made me feel very calm and confident that he would support me throughout the entire process.

I am certain that should Mr. Nichols be appointed as a Circuit Court Judge; he will review each case fairly and without prejudice. He is a sincere and honest person and I know that he can and will fulfill the functions and duties to the best of his abilities.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodney Tateyama", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Rodney Tateyama

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/20/2024 2:15:21 PM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Morio Onishi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Dear Senate Judiciary Committee members, I have had the pleasure to work at the Office of the Public Defender for over eight years. Before Steve was promoted to be one of my Felony Supervisors, my office was adjacent to Steve's office. I would often go to Steve for advice on my cases without hesitation because Steve is always approachable, extremely knowledgeable, and was willing to help me in whatever way he could. I value Steve's advice because he truly is a consummate professional. I have appeared before many of the current judges on this island and I can say with confidence that Steve will make an excellent Circuit Court Judge. Sincerely, Jason Onishi, Esq.

HENRY P. TING
Honolulu, HI 96822

June 20, 2024

By <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: GM 4 - Nomination of Steven Nichols to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit

Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for Steven Nichols to serve as Judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. It is my privilege to know Steve as a friend and a co-worker at the Office of the Public Defender for over twenty years. Instead of offering generalized platitudes and praise for Steve, I want to share two instances that exemplify Steve's qualities and character as an attorney and as a person.

First, as a junior attorney handling misdemeanor cases, Steve purchased an airplane ticket for his client so the client could reunite with his family on the mainland. In the short time he had to work with this client, Steve not only resolved his criminal case, but took the time to get to know his client and empathize with his plight. At that time, Steve was still paying off his student loans and bringing home lunch to work every day. I have always remembered Steve's kindness and generosity and how he went out of his way to make a difference in one person's life.

On another occasion, I was handling an overloaded misdemeanor calendar in District Court, and Steve came to help after he had resolved his own cases. I vividly remember a custody client who was homeless, drug addled, and agitated. I did not understand a word he said. Steve took over the interview and within minutes was able to advise the client, gain his trust, and resolve the case. Even now I can hear Steve asking the client, "Do you trust me?", and the client answering in the affirmative.

Steve is a person we should all aspire to be in our personal and professional lives. You will be proud to have him represent the Judiciary. For these reasons, I support the appointment of Steve to be Judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit and ask for your favorable consideration of his nomination.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Henry Ting

Dear Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Glenn Wakai, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Re: Testimony in Support of Steven R. Nichols's confirmation to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit

I am submitting this letter to you in strong support of Steven R. Nichols's confirmation for the judicial vacancy in the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

I have known Steve since 2018 when I interned at the Office of the Public Defender in the summer after my first year of law school. Steve was welcoming, kind, and very helpful. One thing that I noticed about Steve that I will never forget, is that he was always willing to lend a hand to any division in the office, even when it was not a part of his normal responsibilities. As one of the most experienced attorneys in the office, Steve was often busy with trial preparation and court, but he always had time to assist newer attorneys and even interns like me.

As a judicial law clerk in the Circuit Court of the First Circuit for a judge sitting on the criminal calendar, I was able to witness Steve in court. Steve's demeanor in court was always calm and collected. He was always very professional with his clients while maintaining a good working relationship with them. Steve was always organized and prepared for court and his performance in court displayed his keen legal mind and commitment to zealous advocacy.

I am fortunate to now be employed at the Office of the Public Defender and was able to work with Steve as a colleague before he left the office. Steve guided me through numerous legal issues and has been a great encouragement throughout my career. Even as he excels in his own career, he continues to be a mentor to many new attorneys.

When Steve left the Office of the Public Defender and went into private practice, he expanded his practice and showed that he was able to continue the work he had been doing for years, as well as pivot to learn new procedure and law, a quality I believe will help him excel as a Circuit Court judge.

I have spent most of my short career practicing in the District Court, Juvenile Court, and Criminal Family Court. Through my experience appearing before numerous judges, I have been able to observe the hard work and care that goes in to being a judge. I believe that Steve possesses all the necessary qualities to become an excellent Circuit Court judge including the right temperament and thorough and wide-ranging legal background. I strongly support the confirmation of Steven R. Nichols.

Thank you for your consideration,

/s/ Aubrey M. M. Bento, Esq.

BRADLEY CHONG

ATTORNEY AT LAW, A LAW CORPORATION

Dillingham Transportation Bldg • Suite 201 • 735 Bishop Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Friday, June 21, 2024

Senate Judiciary Committee
Chair: Senator Karl Rhoads
State of Hawaii Capital
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Steven R. Nichols Nominee for Circuit Court Judge
First Circuit, State of Hawaii

Dear Senator Rhoads:

I write this letter in support of Steven Nichols nomination to serve as a Circuit Court Judge in the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. I met Steve approximately 20 years ago while we were playing in the Lawyer's Basketball League. Steve was an avid basketball player who was very skilled and competitive but was always a good sport whether his team won or lost. Throughout the years, I grew to know Steve professionally during my experiences and interactions with him in Family Court. I believe that Steve is an intelligent and considerate person of very high integrity. As a family law practitioner since 1992, I have observed Steve in Court as both a litigant and as a Per Diem Judge. Steve is a highly skilled litigator who is also a master of the Court rules and the Rules of Evidence.

On a personal level, Steve is born and raised in Mililani, Hawaii. He graduated from Mililani High School and was a standout member of their varsity basketball team. Steve is a loving husband and very nurturing Father of three young girls. He's coached his daughters in both basketball and soccer. Steve graduated from the William Richardson School of Law at UH Manoa in 2002 and previously worked at the Office of the Public Defender where he developed his excellent litigation skills and represented under-privileged and low-income Defendants, including but not limited to many members of the Hawaiian community. During the past few years, Steve worked in private practice and has diligently served his clients' interests while also performing an abundance of pro bono work for destitute members of our community.

As previously noted, Steve also served as a Family Court per diem Judge, and he possesses the proper judicial temperament and has impressively and quickly grasped the fundamental principles of divorce, paternity, guardianships and adoptions. Steve has also demonstrated the unique ability to assist litigants in resolving their claims in an amicable and equitable manner without resorting to further costly litigation.

I believe that Steven Nichols is a person of high integrity who is very helpful, patient and compassionate. I believe that Steve is highly qualified and a person who will be fair to all litigants and treat attorneys, court staff and members of the public with dignity and respect. Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts and impressions of Steven R. Nichols with your committee.

Very truly yours,



Bradley Chong

Hawai'i State Senate – Committee on Judiciary

GM 4 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai'i, gubernatorial nominee, STEVEN NICHOLS, for a term to expire in 10 years

RE: Strong support of GM 4

June 21, 2024

Aloha e Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary-

I write in enthusiastic **support** of Steven Nichols' confirmation to the Circuit Court. His extensive background in the legal profession coupled with his prior experiences in public service makes him an ideal candidate to fairly, competently, and dispassionately serve as a judge.

I first met Steven over a decade ago while I served as a Law Clerk to the Honorable Dexter D. Del Rosario. Steven had also served in the same capacity at the beginning of his career, and we formed a fast relationship having worked for the same mentor. I followed a similar career path, following Steven to the Office of the Public Defender, where he eventually became a mentor for myself and other fledgling attorneys.

Over his career, Steven has served Hawai'i's most challenged and vulnerable communities as a Public Defender. His zealous advocacy was a model for many young attorneys. Steven proved to be even more of an example, as he always worked across the aisle with prosecutors without allowing the adversarial nature of criminal litigation to affect his ability to be kind, patient, and honest. I wholeheartedly believe that Steven will bring the same balanced approach to his role as a judge, and I have full faith that he can do so impartially.

For these reasons, I humbly ask that you **SUPPORT GM 4** and Steven Nichols' confirmation. His appointment would be a great benefit to the Judiciary, the State, and the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,



Tyler Iokepa Gomes

TESTIMONY OF
ALEN M. K. KANESHIRO, ATTORNEY AT LAW
TO THE
SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
ON
JUNE 24, 2024, 10:30 A.M.

RE: GM4

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION FOR JUDICIAL NOMINEE
STEVEN NICHOLS

Dear Ronald D. Kouchi and Members of the Senate:

I am submitting the following testimony in support for Circuit Court Judicial Nominee Steven Nichols.

I have known Mr. Nichols for approximately 21 years, first, when I was a law student at the William S. Richardson School of Law interning at the Office of the Public Defender. Ms. Nicholas was a co-worker and mentor when I worked at the Office of the Public Defender from 2006 to 2010. Mr. Nichols and I remained close colleagues even after I went into private practice and started my own firm.

Over the years, I have come to know and respect Mr. Nichols as a person dedicated to his family, his clients, the legal community, and to the practice of law.

As a practicing attorney, Mr. Nichols has always been compassionate, diligent, and responsible in representing his clients ethically and zealously. He is always respectful to other attorneys, prosecutors, and judges. I believe that his diligence and temperament are the type of qualities that would make him an excellent judge.

Over the years, Mr. Nichols and I have occasionally worked together on cases, and I have sought advice from him on more than one occasion. It has been a blessing that I have been able to know Mr. Nichols on both a personal and professional level.

Mr. Nichols has a personality that can put a person at ease, while still being assertive without a hint of arrogance. When Mr. Nichols left the Office of the Public Defender and went into private practice, there were occasions when I had a case where he was opposing counsel. In each of those situations, I knew that I was up against a formidable adversary, yet I also felt some relief knowing that Mr. Nichols would be ethical, even tempered, and fair. Qualities which I believe are imperative for a judge to possess.

I have no reservations in saying that Mr. Nichols is imminently qualified to serve as Circuit Court judge, and I respectfully submit my support for confirmation of Judicial Nominee Steven Nichols.

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/21/2024 7:45:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Carkin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Aloha, I am writing in strong support of Steven Nichols for confirmation to a Circuit Court judicial position. Steve is an attorney who I have looked up to. His legal knowledge and skill, combined with his compassion and respect for others are what make him an exemplary attorney. I believe these same skills would make Steve an excellent judge. He has the values, temperament, and professionalism a Judge needs to serve our Judiciary proudly. There's no doubt in my mind that Steve will be an outstanding judge. Thank you for considering Steve for one of these prestigious positions. Mahalo, Allison M. Carkin Deputy Public Defender

To the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Aloha, my name is Kevin Napoleon. I am a Captain in the Honolulu Police Department, assigned as the Executive Officer for the Specialized Services Division. I have been a police officer for over 32 years and am also a retired combat veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan. I am submitting this testimonial in support of Steve Nichols' confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee for his nomination to serve as a Circuit Court Judge.

I have personally known Steve Nichols for over 11 years. We first met as coaches for AYSO soccer when both of our daughters were four years old. It was our first time coaching soccer. Mr. Nichols was the head coach, and I was the assistant coach. We instantly became friends, despite the perception that Police Officers and Public Defenders don't get along. Our families have been close friends ever since.

Regarding Mr. Nichols' character, I have personally known him to be a kind, honest, and fair person. In all my dealing with Mr. Nichols, personally, as a coach, and in the courtroom, I have known him to be always professional, as well as cool and level-headed. I have never known Mr. Nichols to lose his temper or to act without careful consideration of the situation or the parties involved.

I've known Mr. Nichols to be a loving and caring husband to his wife and three daughters. In the community, Mr. Nichols has always given freely of his spare time to not only spend time with his family but also as a coach for kids soccer and basketball.

I believe Mr. Nichols is a perfect candidate to perform the duties of Circuit Court Judge, due to his character and professionalism. I support him fully in his nomination for this position and would humbly request the committee seriously consider him as the right candidate for this position as he will perform the duties to the best of his abilities, with the highest degree of professionalism, honesty, integrity, and fairness.

Should you have any questions regarding my testimony, please feel free to contact me either telephonically or via email.

Respectfully,

Kevin F. P. Napoleon,
Captain, Specialized Services Division
Honolulu Police Department
801 S. Beretania Street, Honolulu, HI 96813
(m)808-864-7015
(w)808-723-3375
(work email)knapoleon@honolulu.gov
(personal email)sifunap@me.com

JAMES S. TABE

P.O. BOX 893846
MILILANI, HAWAI‘I 96789

June 24, 2024

GM4: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, Gubernatorial Nominee, Steven Nichols

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

I fully support the confirmation of Steven Nichols, Gubernatorial Nominee, to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

As a former deputy public defender and state public defender, I have known Mr. Nichols since 2003 when he first joined the Office of the Public Defender. I have worked closely with Mr. Nichols while we were at the office.

Mr. Nichols is simply a kind, decent, and generous person. He truly thinks of others before himself. I have on occasion witnessed his interactions with his clients at the jails and at the courthouse. He treats his clients with respect, compassion, and dignity. He understands that his clients, who are charged with the most serious of crimes, are at their most vulnerable. At the same time, he is honest and straightforward with them. He may give his clients hope, but he is realistic and does not over promise outcomes. Because of his demeanor, character, and sensitivity, he rarely was “fired” by his clients.

Mr. Nichols’ generosity also extended to his fellow co-workers. When he was with the Office of the Public Defender, he made it a point to spend time with the inexperienced attorneys and with the law school and college interns. He would invite law school and college interns to accompany him to court and to the jails and prisons. He not only allowed inexperienced attorneys and law school interns to second chair his jury trials, but he also took the time and effort to teach and involve his second chairs in the trial process.

Mr. Nichols is also very active in his (and my) neighborhood community – Mililani. Most of us who volunteer and are involved in youth sports (e.g. AYSO, Little League) get started when our children join the youth leagues. Mr. Nichols, however, is unlike most volunteers. He became involved with the Mililani

Basketball Association (MBA) at the age of 17 years old while in high school. He was a volunteer coach and referee. Mr. Nichols was also actively involved in the Mililani AYSO program as a coach (and referee) even though he was unfamiliar with the sport of soccer. Mr. Nichols' involvement is also not limited to athletics; he is actively involved at his children's school community. He has been an active member of the Mililani Mauka Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), including being the current PTO's vice-president.

Not only does Mr. Nichols possess outstanding character, but he is also an excellent attorney. He holds himself to high standards of preparation and performance. He is well respected by the judges and the prosecutors for his professionalism, integrity, and legal knowledge. He has not only the intellect to grasp complex legal issues, but more importantly, the ability to articulate and explain his analysis in a thoughtful, thorough, and intelligent manner. He is unafraid to take a case to trial, including those cases in which the evidence is overwhelming for the prosecution. Although I do not judge/rate attorneys on "won loss" records, I must point out that Mr. Nichols successfully represented two very difficult high-profile defendants at trial: State v. Jordan Smith, charged with murder and attempted murder in Waikiki (two hung jury trials and an eventual plea bargain to a lesser charge); and State v. Shaun Branco Taguchi, charged with murder (resulting in an acquittal).

In addition to his legal acumen, Mr. Nichols has a strong work ethic, good common sense, and practical judgment, which make him well qualified to serve as a judge.

As long as I have known him, Mr. Nichols has practiced law with competence, zealotness, compassion, integrity, and humility. He has demonstrated that he possesses the ability, the experience, and the qualities to be circuit court judge. Mr. Nichols will certainly be an asset to the judiciary, and I am proud to support him 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 stylized flourish extending to the right.

James S. Tabe

June 22, 2024

To: Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Liann Ebesugawa

Re: STRONG SUPPORT OF GM 4 Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of
Hawaii, Gubernatorial Nominee, STEVEN NICHOLS

Hearing: Monday, June 24, 2024, 10:30 a.m., Conference Room 016

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

I write this letter in strong support of Steven Nichols's nomination to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

Steve is a wonderful person. I have known him since law school and did a summer Circuit Court clerkship with him in 2001 for Judge Dexter Del Rosario.

During our clerkship, we were the only two law clerks for Judge Del Rosario so I worked very closely with Steve. I found him to be hardworking and compassionate. He was always even-tempered and fair in all his dealings with others. For decades following law school, Steve dedicated himself to public service. He was a long-time State of Hawaii public defender. His legal acumen and exemplary service is evidenced by the very senior positions he achieved there.

I believe Steve would be an asset to the State. He would bring credibility to the bench and I have every belief that he will serve our community well.

I urge your appointment of Steven Nichols's nomination.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support.

Liann Ebesugawa

Dear Senate Committee on the Judiciary,

I am submitting this letter in strong support of Steven R. Nichols's appointment as a Circuit Court judge. Steve and I have been friends for many years, and it is my firm belief that he would be an immense asset to the Judiciary as a Circuit Court judge.

I first worked with Steve in 2018 at the Office of the Public Defender, when I was a third-year law student interning at the office full-time. Steve has always struck me as a kind, even-tempered person and a fierce advocate for the underserved.

Steve is an exemplary trial attorney and has a keen legal mind, but I find his temperament and affability to be some of his most admirable qualities. While working with him, I was impressed with his collegial treatment of his opposing counsel and his utmost respect for the Judiciary.

I am now employed as a deputy public defender and had the pleasure of working with Steve until his departure from our office in September 2023 to go into private practice. During my time working with him, Steve worked on the most serious Class A felony cases, but he was always willing to help other attorneys at the office and would share his breadth and depth of experience candidly. When he was appointed as felony court supervisor, his role in the office developed further and he proved to be a competent leader by communicating effectively, treating others fairly, and advocating for the attorneys under his supervision.

When he left the Office of the Public Defender to go into private practice, he expanded his skillset and drew upon his various experiences as a deputy public defender and used them to become an excellent private attorney practicing in both criminal and family law.

In sum, Steve is an outstanding attorney who is humble, conscientious, and always striving to learn more about the practice of law. He possesses the professional credentials and temperament that would enable him to excel as a Circuit Court judge.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,
Kaitlyn M. H. Iwashita
Deputy Public Defender

June 23, 2024

Senate Judiciary Committee,

It is my pleasure to recommend Steven Richard Nichols, attorney, Law Office of Steven R. Nichols, and per diem family court judge as a nominee for the Circuit Court of the First Circuit (O'ahu).

Steven Nichols is not only an exceptional family man but an outstanding citizen in our Mililani community. I have had the honor of personally getting to know Steven, his wife Sharon and his 3 daughters. He dedicates his time to bettering children and those around him by coaching youth basketball in the Mililani Community Athletic Association of which he also serves on the board. He is fair, caring, and consistently has a positive attitude no matter what the situation may be. His ability to see the bigger picture, give insightful and productive feedback to our keiki is nothing but inspiring.

Steven would be an incredible asset to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit here in O'ahu. The authenticity of his character alone is unrivaled. His empathy, integrity, and commitment to the people would be a great asset to the people Hawaii.

Sincerely yours,

Wesley Au Hong

June 23, 2024

Senator Karl Rhoads
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 228
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Karl Rhoads and members of the committee:

I am writing this letter in support of the nomination and confirmation of Mr. Steven R. Nichols to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit.

I met Mr. Nichols during my 2021 internship at the Office of the Public Defender for the State of Hawai'i when I was in law school. As a first-generation law student, starting a career in the legal field was daunting, and I went into my internship with minimal knowledge about the law. However, from the start of my internship, Mr. Nichols extended his mentorship, checked in on various interns, and assigned engaging, yet challenging assignments. Despite his busy schedule and being an experienced and talented attorney, Mr. Nichols would personally sit down with the interns and consider our ideas and input about the cases. He always remained humble and inspired many of us who were learning.

Since my internship, I also got to know Mr. Nichols personally. Growing up in the public school system, I understand how important it is for those in leadership positions to continue to play a part in the community. This is something I have always admired of Mr. Nichols. Mr. Nichols has dedicated his time as a volunteer basketball coach, as part of the Mililani Mauka Parent Teacher Organization, and assisted the Mililani High School Mock Trial Team. For these reasons, I believe Mr. Nichols is not only a great mentor and leader within the legal community, but also within the local community as well.

I firmly believe that Mr. Nichols would be a great addition to the judiciary and will not only serve the Hawai'i community well, but will do so with integrity and humility. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Mr. Nichols's nomination and the consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Saige Miller', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Saige Miller

GM-4

Submitted on: 6/23/2024 8:30:44 AM

Testimony for JDC on 6/24/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Sagaysay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: To Senator Rhoads and Committee Members: I write in strong support of the confirmation of Steven Nichols as judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. I have known Steve for over twenty years, in a professional and personal capacity. I had the honor and pleasure of working with him at the Office of the Public Defender. I have always known Steve to be a very respectful and even-tempered person. He is humble, intelligent, and very hard-working. With his extensive litigation experience, strong sense of justice and fairness, and work ethic, I am very confident that Steve will make an excellent Circuit Court Judge. Thank you for your consideration. Very Truly Yours, Michelle Agsalda Sagaysay



GLENDON & PONCE, LLLC
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June 23, 2024

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: GM4, Testimony in Support of the Confirmation as Circuit Court Judge of the First
Circuit, Judicial Nominee Steven Nichols

Hearing: Monday, June 24, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Rhoads, Senator Keohokalole and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I strongly support the nomination of Steven Nichols to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. He is an experienced, smart, compassionate and hard-working lawyer with qualities that make him an excellent addition to the Circuit Court bench. These qualities have served him well over a distinguished legal career, and I'm excited to see how he will translate his skills to this new endeavor.

I am currently a partner at Glendon & Ponce, a small firm handling state and federal criminal defense and civil litigation matters. I am also the Chair of the State of Hawai'i Defender Council, President of the Paepae o He'eia Board of Directors, and member of the Native Hawaiian Bar Association Board of Directors.

I've known Mr. Nichols since we attended law school together at the William S. Richardson School of Law. He was a year ahead of me in law school and all other career moves. He started at the State of Hawai'i Office of the Public Defender a year before me in 2003. I have had a front row seat to observe his 20+ year legal career take shape, and I've always been impressed with him. He is a quiet leader who people listen and pay attention to. He does not have to speak loudly for his voice to be heard, and that is because his actions speak louder than his words. To watch him in action, litigating before a crowd of jurors and spectators, is to understand how skilled he is. He is a formidable advocate for his clients and a smart, compassionate lawyer skilled in negotiation and trials. But mostly, he's someone you can rely on to get the job done. I

believe his trustworthiness is at the core of his success; you can trust him to exercise good judgment and diligence to do the work and get the job done no matter how big or small the task is.

I believe that Mr. Nichols will make excellent contributions as a Circuit Court judge. He brings so much experience with him to a court where he can make a difference. He knows the ins and outs of Circuit Court, trials, evidence and moving a calendar along. After years of practicing at Circuit Court as a Deputy Public Defender, he's spent the last year in private practice rounding out his experience. While he may not have a civil practice background, he clerked for the Honorable Dexter D. Del Rosario while he was on the civil calendar and can draw on that experience. Should he sit on a civil calendar, I trust that what he doesn't know, he will seek out help for. He is not too proud to ask for help, and he won't shy away from the work to get the job done.

In all the years I've known him, I have seen his relentless commitment to the practice of law and public service. I've also seen his relentless dedication to family: his wife and three young daughters. He's the kind of family man who understands the value of balancing hard work with family life. Just last year, when starting a private practice after 20 years as a public defender, he was still the dedicated girl dad who took his daughters on a trip of a lifetime to see Taylor Swift in concert. He is the real deal, someone who I believe has the experience and balanced mindset to make an excellent judge. I can only hope you will give him this opportunity to serve us all.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my thoughts.

Me ka ha'aha'a,



Crystal K. Glendon

LAW OFFICE OF JENNIFER D.K. NG, LLC

Jennifer D.K. Ng, Esq.

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Hilo, Hawaii 96720

808.935.6000 phone

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June 23, 2024

[Via capitol.hawaii.gov/account/submittestimonyss.aspx](http://via.capitol.hawaii.gov/account/submittestimonyss.aspx)

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
415 S. King Street, Conference Room 016
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: GM4
Letter of Strong Support for Steven Nichols to serve as Circuit Court Judge in the
Circuit Court of the First Circuit

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

Please accept this letter in strong support of Steven Nichols, to serve as Judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. I have known Steve for over twenty years, and can say with all confidence that he has the intellect, character, temperament, and experience necessary to be an outstanding circuit court judge.

I first met Steve while serving together as deputy public defenders for the State of Hawaii. Steve is a respected attorney known for his trial advocacy skills and professional demeanor. He is also a per diem judge, experience that is no doubt valuable to serving as a circuit court judge.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to get to know Steve outside of the work environment. He is a devoted father and husband with a wonderful wife and three daughters. In addition to his commitment to career and family, Steve has also dedicated time to serve the community. Professionally, he has participated in criminal law forums, bench bar conferences, and Courts in the Community. He also volunteers his time serving on PTO boards in the Mililani area and has coached numerous youth soccer and basketball teams.

It is without reservation or hesitation that I offer this letter in strong support of Steven Nichols to serve as Judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Jennifer D.K. Ng

Jennifer D.K. Ng

JON N. IKENAGA
STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

DEFENDER COUNCIL
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HONOLULU OFFICE
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WAILUKU, HAWAI'I 96793
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FAX NO. (808) 984-5022

May 19, 2024

Dear Senate Committee,

This letter is in support of Steve Nichols. I've known Steve Nichols since I was an intern at the Office of the Public Defender as a 2L. His resume speaks volumes to his years of experience and wisdom as an accomplished attorney. In addition to his strong work ethic, diligence, and determination, he has proven that he can make decisions with skill and genuine care for his clients. Even in high pressure situations, he remains composed, courteous, fair, and even tempered. I am confident that as a judge he will continue to exude all these qualities and conduct himself with unshakable integrity.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Rachel K.X. Murakami

June 23, 2024

To The Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor,

Please accept the following words in support of Steven Nichols' nomination as a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit.

My name is Charles M. Cryan and I am an attorney at the Office of the Public Defender. I have worked closely with Steven over the last 7 ½ years or so during our time as co-workers at the Office of the Public Defender. During that time, I have been extremely impressed by his intellect, dedication, compassion, and good character.

Steven has always been extremely dedicated to the representation of his clients and is an excellent co-worker. When he left the office to start his own law practice, it was a huge loss to the Office of the Public Defender. As a co-worker, he displayed a high degree of respect and commitment. He is an extremely hard worker, is always prepared, and always represented our office well when he was at court or interacting with the public. I have no doubt that he will represent the Hawaii State Judiciary in an extremely positive way as a Circuit Court Judge. Even when confronted by an extremely heavy caseload, Steven never ceased to be extremely respectful and patient with the people around him.

I wholeheartedly support Steven Nichols' appointment to the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. Steven's integrity, professional competence, and diligence are all off the charts. I consider Steven to be a professional role-model and have appreciated his guidance and support over the years. I can say without reservation of any kind that Steven will meet the high standards of conduct that are expected of a Circuit Court Judge.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Cryan



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

Steven Nichols
Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit (GM4)

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

FROM: Jesse K. Souki
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Monday, June 24, 2024
Conference Room 016 and Videoconference
State Capitol

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) Board of Directors' comments on Steven Nichols' nomination for Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit.

After a rigorous process, described below, the HSBA Board of Directors concluded that Mr. Nichols is **QUALIFIED**. Mr. Nichols was admitted to the Hawaii State Bar in 2002. He currently serves as a Per Diem Family Court Judge and has over twenty years of experience in criminal law as a deputy public defender. He has earned recognition from his peers for his ability to maintain compassion and empathy, and for his focus on the greater good of helping individuals. Additionally, he is known for his work ethic, integrity, reliability, and sincerity.

Mr. Nichols has devoted extensive time to public service and investing in his community, including his time spent with the Access to Justice Room, Courts in the Community, and the Criminal Bench Bar conference. Additionally, he is active in community service in the Mililani area, serving on the Mililani Mauka Parent Teacher Organization and as a coach on various athletic organizations.

The HSBA Board of Directors followed its multi-step process to arrive at its conclusion, which included:

- The nominee was notified of the HSBA appointment review process, which includes a questionnaire requesting educational credentials, legal and other professional work experiences, and personal references; a resume; a copy of the Judicial Selection Commission (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.

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- The HSBA membership received an electronic notification of the appointment and a request for comments on the nominee.
- A neutral fact-finding body comprised of three HSBA Board members was called upon to review documentation submitted by the nominee, contact references submitted by the nominee, review comments received from the HSBA membership, conduct follow-up for clarification, if necessary, and prepare a report for the HSBA Board.
- Documentation submitted by Mr. Nichols 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. Nichols in all categories of the HSBA criteria, which include Integrity, Diligence, Legal knowledge and ability, Professional experience, Temperament, Financial responsibility, Public service, and Ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position.
- The Executive Director and I met with Mr. Nichols on June 19, 2024, to discuss the subcommittee's findings.
- On June 20, 2024, the HSBA Board of Directors interviewed Mr. Nichols in an executive session.
- The HSBA Board deliberated and voted that Mr. Nichols was qualified.

Thank you for your time and attention.