

TESTIMONY

March 30, 2007

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public
Housing

FROM: JP Kaina
[Print your name]

SUBJECT: GM 275, Confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as
Director of the Department of Human Services for
a term to expire 12-6-2010

**Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol**

My name is JP Kaina and I strongly support the
[print your name]

confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as Director of the
Department of Human Services for a second term.

Attached is a copy of my previous letter dated
Was not dated
[write date of your previous letter] that I sent to you.
I am now submitting my letter to you again as my official
testimony in strong support of Lillian B. Koller's
reconfirmation.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.


[Sign your name and date]

Dear senator Chun,

Thanks for the funds to power our winter program. Because of your support, we don't have to pay for activities such as bowling and Golf at Pitt. Once again, thanks for everything!

Sincerely,



JP King

7th grader

Stevenson Middle

Dear Senator Suzanne Chun - Oakland,

I thank for the funds you provided us to have this program Hale Kipa. This program was a fun and exciting thing to do over the winter break. I get to meet learn people from different schools. Do a lot of fun activities, like learning what drugs can do to you.

Yours,

Member Matthew

April 2, 2007

To: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair, Human Services and Public Housing Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 226
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Testimony for GM 275 supporting reconfirmation of DHS Director Lillian Koller

Dear Senator Chun Oakland:

Please accept my letter of support for the reconfirmation of Lillian Koller as Director of Human Services.

In 2005, Director Koller supported the legislative funding of the only medical provider specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of child abuse in the State of Hawaii. Director Koller's understanding and appreciation for trained clinicians in child abuse strengthened her efforts to improve the overall effectiveness of Child Welfare Services. As program manager, I found Director Koller extremely driven and focused on ways to improve the system. She met obstacles head on and was unafraid to fail. Her tenacity in a system often described as complacent was refreshing.

Change agents, like Director Koller, are sorely needed. Thank you for the opportunity to voice my support.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance Segawa

March 28, 2007

MEMORANDUM:

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair, Human Services and Public Housing Committee

FROM: Frances Driesbach, Program Manager
The Paxen Group, Inc.

SUBJECT: Testimony for GM 275 supporting reconfirmation of DHS Director Lillian Koller

As Director for The State of Hawaii Department of Human Services, Lillian Koller has worked hard for the betterment of Hawaii's families. Her support of programs for at-risk youth such as About Face!, Hawaii Community AllStars and Jump Start has benefited thousands of teens across the state. She is professional, knowledgeable and personable, and her concern for the community is evident in all aspects of her work.

For instance, a young man who was not engaged in high school and on the path to dropping out participated in the About Face! program. After completing the after school program, he realized that he needed to think beyond high school and work toward his future. He stayed in school, his grades and attendance improved, and he graduated. This youth is one of thousands of examples of teens who gain positive benefit from the support of people like Director Lillian Koller who ensure that there are services available to assist them in making positive choices for their futures.

Please reconfirm Lillian Koller as Director of The State of Hawaii Department of Human Services.

Sincerely,



Frances Driesbach
Program Manager
The Paxen Group, Inc.

March 29, 2007

Dominic Naki / Taitaiou Suafaasee
2920-C Kalihi St.
Honolulu, HI 96819

To Whom It May Concern:

We are licensed foster home care providers with 3 foster boys in our home. We would like to congratulate and acknowledge Lillian Koller and her staff at Kokua Ohana on a job well done with the transition of becoming a licensed foster home care provider. She and her staff were so supportive and prompt with any questions we had and very helpful when we needed help in the class or at home.

We were somewhat surprised at the level of care and attention they provided us throughout the entire process. This attention to details was over and above what we had expected. We were pleasantly surprised to see this kind of customer care from any agency and credit Lillian and her staff for making it a wonderful experience. We know we can pick up the phone and call Trish, Kanani or Gwen at the office and talk story with them like a good friend or sister. The feeling of being a part of the family is what makes these people real and down to earth. The name is very fitting for what they do every day "Kokua Ohana". It's very fitting and is exactly what they have done for us and our new family.

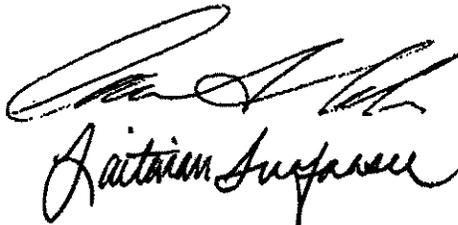
Even after the process was over and we were licensed to be a foster home, we still keep in contact with each other. They do follow up calls to see how everything's going and how the kids are doing. They also ask if there's anything we need for the kids and return our calls promptly. It's hard to forget these people and it's nice to know they haven't forgotten us.

We would like to see Lillian and her staff continue to improve and build upon these successes and would like to see her remain in her current position for another year.

In closing, it's obvious we're big fans of Kokua Ohana as well as Lillian and her staff. It takes people with big hearts to do what they do everyday. We believe you have to love what you do in order to do a great job. These people have what it takes to help less fortunate children and pair them up with people who really love children as much as they do. Our hats off to Lillian and her staff at Kokua Ohana. Keep up the good work Lillian and don't stop doing what you're doing. God Bless.

Aloha,

Dominic Naki
Taitaiou Suafaasee



Wendy Mow-Taira, LSW, ACSW
6033 Haleola Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 95821

To: Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair and Members of the Senate Human Services and Housing Committee

From : Wendy Mow-Taira, LSW, ACSW

Re: Support for Confirmation of Lillian Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services, GM 275

Good Afternoon Senator Chun-Oakland and members of the Senate Human Services and Housing Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how much Lillian Koller has done to improve the recruitment of foster homes and adoptive services in the State of Hawaii. I am Wendy Mow-Taira, licensed social worker. I am here as an individual to speak about my recent experiences with Lillian Koller in supporting foster children reunification with their families and providing targeted recruiting to insure that all of the children would be in homes that fit their needs.

An example of that would be the creation of Kokua `Ohana in 2004 when Ms. Koller realized the need to improve recruitment efforts among the Native Hawaiian population. This particular group has more than its share of foster children in the state system (52% in foster care vs. the 27% of the population). Ms. Koller, along with support from Micah Kane, Director of Hawaiian Homelands and Commissioner Quannah Stamps from the Administration for Native Americans, made great efforts to accelerate recruitment efforts of Native Hawaiian families in order meet the needs of these children.

Ms. Koller has recognized that there was a disparity between the number of Hawaiian children in the foster care system and the number of homes available to foster them. She and her colleagues used an innovative approach to recruit homes, license foster parents and certify their homes for foster care in order to increase the supply of homes needed. Driven by the Native American experience where children were taken off the reservations due to a shortage of foster homes, this innovative approach also solicited support for foster homes using community and faith based resources.

Recruitment was targeted in areas of high concentration of Native Hawaiians as well as areas where there was high need for foster homes. Churches and community organizations were also solicited for foster families as well as ongoing support for families. Ms. Koller also provided leadership and guidance to the program via staff support and her own personal support of the program from its inception.

March 29, 2007

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate House and Human Services Committee
State Capitol, Room 226
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Chun Oakland, Re: GM 275 Lillian Koller Reconfirmation

I am writing in firm support of Ms. Lillian Koller as Director for the Department of Human Services. I feel that Ms. Koller has led the Department of Human Services well and has done much to increase services to educate children and nurture families of Hawai'i.

As the Outreach Coordinator of the "Ka Pa'alana Program," a nine month pilot program that provides preschool education and basic needs for houseless children and their families on the Wai'anae Coast, I have been witness to the many lives that are being touched and this would not be possible without the funding provided by the Department of Human Services as led by Ms. Koller. In partnership with other non-profits and service providers such as the Wai'anae Community Outreach, we've had the opportunity to take our preschool to Ma'ili Beach to service 10 keiki, 15 parents, and transition 22 families off of the beach and into the Wai'anae Civic Center shelter since starting our nine month pilot program in January.

I applaud the efforts of Ms. Koller and her subordinates in wanting to make a difference with our present system by increasing the number of programs available for homeless families.

Mahalo for giving me this opportunity to share my testimony of support for Ms. Koller.

Respectfully,



Errol Lee
Outreach Coordinator, Ka Pa'alana Project
Partners in Development Foundation

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate House and Human Services Committee
State Capital, Room 226
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Testimony for GM 275 supporting reconfirmation of DHS Director Lillian Koller

Dear Senator Chun Oakland:

This letter is to support Ms. Lillian Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services. Ms. Koller has led the Department of Human Services well and has done much to increase the number of educational and outreach programs available to homeless Native Hawaiian communities.

As the Program Manager of the "Ka Pa'alana Traveling Preschool and Homeless Outreach," a program that provides center-based preschool learning for homeless children ages birth to five and a family and wellness literacy programs for their families, I have been witness to many of the "least fortunate in our midst" appreciation and excitement for early childhood education. In partnership with the Wai'anae Community Outreach, Ka Pa'alana has served over 28 keiki and 34 parents with quality preschool and family education since February 12, 2007 at the "Hope for a New Beginning" Shelter at Kalaeloa.

This project is funded by the first of its kind collaboration between public and private sectors. DHS and the Kamehameha Schools are working collaboratively to fund this nine month project. Director Koller was instrumental in funding this nine month needs assessment project. The data Ka Pa'alana gathers will be instrumental in providing mobile educational, health, and vocational services for families in need not only along the Leeward Coast of O'ahu, but statewide as well.

I applaud the efforts of Ms. Koller and her subordinates in wanting to make a difference with our present system by increasing the number of programs available for homeless families.

Mahalo for giving me this opportunity to share my words of support for Ms. Koller.

Sincerely Yours,



Danny Goya, Program Manager
Ka Pa'alana Traveling Preschool and Homeless Outreach
Partners in Development Foundation

TESTIMONY

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FROM: Raymond Sanborn, President, Kama'aina Kids

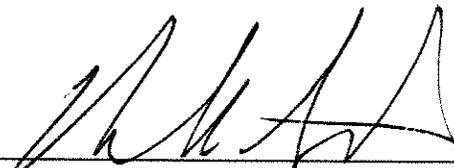
SUBJECT: GM 275, Confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as
Director of the Department of Human Services for
A term to expire 12-6-10

**Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room -16, State Capitol**

My name is Raymond C. Sanborn and I strongly support the confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services for a second term.

This serves as my official written testimony in strong support of Lillian B. Koller's reconfirmation.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify,



Raymond C. Sanborn

TESTIMONY

March 30, 2007

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public
Housing

FROM: Shari Buck
[Print your name]

SUBJECT: GM 275, Confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as
Director of the Department of Human Services for
a term to expire 12-6-2010

**Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol**

My name is Shari Buck and I strongly support the
[print your name]

confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as Director of the
Department of Human Services for a second term.

Attached is a copy of my previous letter dated
Was not dated
[write date of your previous letter] that I sent to you.
I am now submitting my letter to you again as my official
testimony in strong support of Lillian B. Koller's
reconfirmation.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Shari-Lyn 3-29-07
[Sign your name and date]

Dear senator suzanne chun-Oakland,
Thank you for giving/providing money to
Hale Kipa It has intraduced us to
met other students from other
schools. It had also let us get out
and to get a+ive.

Mahalo
Shari

April 02 07 12:00P Frances Dingesbach 0000702120 p.4

April 3, 2007

MEMORANDUM:

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair, Human Services and Public Housing Committee

FROM: Sandra L. E. Lee

SUBJECT: Testimony for GM 275 supporting reconfirmation of DHS Director Lillian Koller

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Sandra Lee and I reside on the Leeward Coast. I am here today to testify in support of the reconfirmation of Lillian Koller, DHS Director.

From 1990 to 1995 I received AFDC benefits. During that period, I was not required to participate in any Educational and/or Employment Training Programs. Basically, I could retain my full benefits until my youngest child reached the age of 18 yrs. old.

In October of 2004 I became a recipient of Public Assistance, once again. I was very impressed when my Eligibility Worker explained the new requirements that are currently structured to assist and encourage recipients to obtain Education and Employment.

Some of the programs that are sponsored through the DHS are the Forward March program, Child Care and the First-To-Work, Employment and Training. Flexible income guidelines help part-time employed recipient's to retain partial benefits. Free day care services are available for recipients that are actively participating in First-To-Work. Transportation benefits include a free monthly bus pass or mileage payments for those who drive.

The medical benefits that are offered to ALL Public Assistance recipient's is literally a "life saver". I would never be able to pay for all of my bi-weekly and/or monthly medication if MED-QUEST did not exist.

Based on my personal experience, I feel the Department of Human Services has done an excellent job under the direction of Lillian Koller.

So, again I ask the committee to vote in favor to reconfirm Lillian Koller for another term as the Director for the Department of Human Services.

Respectfully,

Sandra L. E. Lee

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 275

RE: Consideration and Confirmation as Director for the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, Lillian B. Koller, for a term to expire 12-6-2010.

TO: Committee on Human Services & Public Housing

FROM: Susanna F. Cheung

**HEARING: April 3, 2007, Tuesday, 1:15 pm
Conference Room 016, State Capitol**

NEED: 20 copies to Room 226 in the State Capitol

LATE

Dear Members of the Committee on Human Services & Public Housing:

We support her nomination because our experience with Department of Human Services (DHS) since her appointment to the Directorship position, has been positive. We feel she has been successful in making concrete contributions within the Department of Human Services. She is approachable and responsive to people's concerns. We believe she is a woman passionate about her job and sincerely concerned in making fair, realistic and responsible decisions for the betterment of our community. Since assuming the post, she has garnered the experience and knowledge to perform the challenging work as Director of DHS. We know that although she may not always agree with our position on issues, she has earned our respect by her willingness to listen and work with people.

She is doing well and we urge you to support her nomination so she can continue.

In addition, Ann Higa, Yvonne de Luna, Ronald Renshaw, Jane Valdez and Jack Lappay have all worked with her department and they are also in support of her nomination.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 275

RE: Consideration and Confirmation as Director for the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, Lillian B. Koller, for a term to expire 12-6-2010.

TO: Committee on Human Services & Public Housing

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She is doing well and we urge you to support her nomination so she can continue.

In addition, Ann Higa, Yvonne de Luna, Ronald Renshaw, Jane Valdez and Jack Lappay have all worked with her department and they are also in support of her nomination.

TESTIMONY

April 1, 2007

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FROM: Joseph B. Borgo, ACSW

SUBJECT: GM 275, Confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as Director of the
Department of Human Services for a term to expire 12-6-2010

Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

My name is Joseph Borgo and I come before you today to exhort you in the strongest possible terms to reconfirm Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services for a second term.

My motivation for doing so is my heartfelt conviction that Ms. Koller's continued leadership is vital and necessary to ensure that the Department is able to successfully consolidate and strengthen the many reforms that have taken place due to her initiatives over the last several years.

In more than 40 years of professional social work practice, I have had ample opportunity to observe and reflect on the qualities that make for outstanding leadership. As a senior executive and Chief Executive Officer in State government and in the not-for-profit sector, I have tried to embody those principles in my own practice with at-risk youth and their families. I have faced the challenges and pitfalls of implementing system reform not only as the person directly responsible for enacting the reforms, but also as a consultant to multiple State and County agencies across the country. In the latter capacity, I have worked in Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, California, and Hawaii.

What my many years of practice and reflection have taught me and what my personal experience of Ms. Koller's leadership confirms is her personification of the qualities of an outstanding transformational leader.

Warren G. Bennis, the pioneer in the field of leadership studies, among many pithy comments, notes: "The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it." He also writes: "The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why." He also observes: "Failing organizations are usually over-managed and under-led." I submit that part of the controversy surrounding Ms. Koller's leadership is due to the fact that the senior executives in the Department, including the Director, for many years prior to Ms. Koller assuming the mantle of leadership, have tried to be competent managers rather than transformational leaders. Ms. Koller has not shied away from challenging the status quo. She has questioned existing policies and practices to see whether they can be improved upon, resulting in more and better benefits for the children and families of Hawaii. Her determination to find a better way has resulted in millions of dollars in new Federal revenue, not only for her Department, but for the Attorney General and the Department of Health as well.

Her leadership has transformed Child Welfare Services from a program that spectacularly failed the Child and Family Services Review into a national example of innovation and system reform. She was able to accomplish this by freeing up her people to become leaders themselves. Managers who stagnated in the previous regime have risen to the challenge; have become champions of the change process themselves and leaders vis-à-vis their staff and their colleagues. Collectively they have transformed the agency. All this is due to Ms. Koller empowering them to be leaders instead of managers. As Bennis notes: "Good leaders make people feel that they're at the very heart of things, not at the periphery."

This change is fragile, however, because it is yet incomplete and because some in the agency are reticent to commit. All change (even positive change) is stressful and some seek to avoid stress at all costs. The early stages of change often lead to rising expectations where satisfaction actually declines until the change has become institutionalized and all the barriers to success have been eliminated. That is why Ms. Koller's ongoing leadership is critical. Unless the changes already undertaken are permitted to put down roots and to solidify, the system will revert to the previous homeostasis and it will be even more difficult to enact reform when next it is attempted.

Entropy is a fundamental law of physics. In social service agencies, the entropic condition is to run for the convenience of staff, rather than the convenience of clients.

This is reflected in hours of operation, ease of access, willingness to engage clients, *etc.* Unless one actively fights against it, entropy will prevail. Ms. Koller has led the way in combating the forces of entropy. This has been stressful for those comfortable with the status quo, but it is essential in order to reform the system and to keep it healthy and alive. Ms. Koller has recognized the challenge and has injected energy and resources into the system to combat complacency.

The hallmark of her leadership, however, has been Ms. Koller's fundamental commitment to doing the right thing. Like a laser beam, she is intensely focused on doing what is right for the vulnerable children and families of Hawaii, despite the political or organizational challenges that may present. She is passionate, steadfast and unwavering in that commitment. As the child of Holocaust survivors, she is particularly sensitive to and protective of the dignity and humanity of those whom society seeks to marginalize or exclude: the poor, the addicted, the vulnerable, those unable to fend for themselves.

This passion for excellence and for doing what is right is exactly what makes Ms. Koller such an extraordinary and exemplary leader. These are also the qualities necessary to complete the reforms already begun. Anything less will doom the reform to failure.

Professional colleagues I have spoken to in the community tell me that they have waited more than 20 years for the reforms that Ms. Koller has instituted. Their greatest fear (and mine as well) is that system will revert to the status quo ante. Bennis points out that: "Leadership is the wise use of power. Power is the capacity to translate intention into reality and to sustain it." The reform will not succeed unless Ms. Koller's leadership is there to sustain and nurture it.

To be sure, the Department of Human Services will soldier on if Ms. Koller is not reconfirmed. A golden opportunity for excellence, for transcending the limits of mediocrity, and for professional growth for all the Department's employees and community partners will be lost forever, alas! Ms. Koller's leadership has provided hope for all of us who share her ideals of client service and community capacity-building that this time things will indeed be different; this time the long sought changes will actually come true.

I implore you: "Do not let us down. Do not disappoint us once again. Vote to reconfirm Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services."

JOHN P. KEPPELER
2822 LAOLA PLACE
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813 - 1040

March 31, 2007

Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair, Human Services and Public Housing Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 226
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Regarding: Supporting Testimony of GM 275 Reconfirmation of
Ms. Lillian B. Koller, as Director of the Department of Human Services.

Chair and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate this opportunity to testify to this Committee on my reasoning for recommending the Senate reconfirmation of the State Director Lillian B. Koller.

I am in full support of her reconfirmation because of her effective reform of the human services systems that has been and is being put into place. Those changes were based on a thoughtful and comprehensive review of the child protection processes. And that reform is being guided by a program improvement plan (PIP) that was developed by the entire Department in conjunction with the pertinent federal agencies. To change her positive leadership at this moment could greatly derail the needed service enhancement.

The Commissioner of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families will be honoring Director Lillian B. Koller, later this month, with a national recognition award for her efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect in Hawaii. The intimate involvement of ACYF of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the progress of Hawaii DHS gave this Commissioner sound basis for making this award.

Of particular concern to me, has been the history of insensitive and culturally inappropriate placement of the majority of our children into foster / adoptive care that had been directed by the State. The substance abuse epidemic by the childbearing segment of our community extends and exacerbates the horrible impact on our most innocent and vulnerable victims - minor children. As you remember, there have been very notorious cases of awful abuse and neglect that has haunted our common conscience. Lillian Koller has been and is committed to making a real difference going forward in solving these problems.

Further, in Hawaii, that means policy must address the large number of Native Hawaiian children (56% of all children) that are "in-care" of the state at any given point in time. To the quietly borne consternation and sadness of the Native Hawaiian na kupuna (grandparents), a very disproportionate number of these siblings' groupings have had to be out-placed from kinship and familiar neighborhoods. Sometimes those Court approved placements are for a whole childhood away from Hawaii and their extended ohana. Director Koller has tried to break that gross out-placement cycle with the Kokua Ohana program. She has displayed ability to think "out-of-the-box", quickly and with great compassion for Native Hawaiians and all children of Hawaii Nei.

Still further, her diligence and perseverance has located, had released and spent significant and previously underutilized federal funding to provide the essential services to mitigate the suffering and to begin to reunify the dysfunctional family and to strengthen them. That is commendable.

Additionally, Director Koller has initiated a re-subscription of the Quest program, now underway, to assure that providers are to compete for eligible users of the government paid-for medical services by promoting effective and preventive treatment and consultation. This policy is to assure greater delivery efficiency rather than the past model that tended to be a flat rate fee for constrained services to curb costs and assure profits for the providers. She will attempt "to get the best bang for the State's expenditures" and that is commendable.

These are but a few examples of the innovation started by the Koller administration at DHS. She has been credited with making changes that improve the situations of thousands of clients during the most stressful and agonizing periods of their lives. These sensitive services, by all reports, are handled with concern and sensitivity in tens of thousands of transactions per year with fewer incidents than might be expected.

But still so much good work has been blighted by a few reports of malcontent. Those grievances need to be heard and healed but it does not appear to me that there is sufficient cause to hold up the reconfirmation of Ms. Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services.

Sincerely yours,
John P. Keppeler

jackeppler@hawaii.rr.com
808.864-5410

**John L. Reppun
C/o 47-200 Waihe'e Rd.
Kane'ohe, O'ahu, HI 96744**

March 30, 2007

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Human Services and Public Housing Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 226
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Re: Hearing – Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing – Tuesday,
April 3, 2007 at 1:15 pm; Conference Room 016**

**Testimony Relating to GM 275 - supporting reconfirmation of DHS Director Lillian
B. Koller**

Dear Senator Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Les Ihara & Committee Members:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony. While I may not be able to attend the subject committee meeting in person, I would like to express my support for the re-confirmation of Ms. Lillian B. Koller as Director of the State Department of Human Services. My testimony is my own, and not that of the agency I work for. This said my experience as Executive Director of KEY Project - a Windward Oahu non-profit agency - leads me to step forward with support.

KEY Project, like many other agencies in the field of social and general community service, works most closely with the youth of our area – all of whom are both “in-need” and “at risk” if only because of their proximity to risk factors such as the epidemic-scale use of “ice”, in combination with incredible economic and social pressures that families are experiencing. Our semi-rural community is witness to an ever-widening disparity between those in need and those who can afford...housing, food, transportation, services, health coverage, education, and recreation.

We all struggle to support the array of programs we need, including non-school hour activities (and attendant supervision, mentors), and educational enhancement in areas such as culture and the arts. With the latter KEY has been a beneficiary, through the State Foundation for Culture and the Arts, of the use of TANF funds – an excellent resolution to funding cuts made a couple of years ago for such activities. As a whole community, together with government leadership, we will be wise to continue to explore ways in which State and County alike might better leverage available Federal funds. In this vein, Ms. Koller provides hope.

Ms. Koller clearly shares the deep concerns that agencies such as ours have for identifying continued, reliable sources of funding. She brings a fresh view and an energized perspective to the challenge of providing services to the clientele we serve: youth at risk, native Hawaiians (our area exhibits a substantial representation of this group), and those in need of better health

services and more. In my admittedly limited, direct interaction with Ms. Koller, I have nonetheless come away refreshed by her tangible sincerity, positively charged by her “can-do” perspective and, most-of-all, convinced that her dedication to progress is not self-serving.

I urge your committee’s favorable consideration with her bid for re-confirmation – and the opportunity to “stay the course” with regard to her strategy in addressing human services on behalf of our state.

Mahalo,
John L. Reppun
Windward Resident

TESTIMONY

April 2, 2007

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FROM: Kathy Morris

SUBJECT: GM 275, Confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department
of Human Services for a term to expire 12-6-2010

Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

I am testifying in support of the confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as the Director of Human Services (DHS) for a term to expire 12-6-2010.

I feel that during her tenure, Lillian Koller has been very successful in:

- Accessing federal funding that was not previously taken advantage of allowing the creation of more services for more people

and

- Providing services to at-risk populations throughout the state of Hawaii, especially to the Native Hawaiian Community and projects and programs that serve them.

In my work with Ms. Koller I have found her to be caring and compassionate as well as passionate and extremely supportive of grassroots, community-based, culturally competent programs and organizations.

I feel Lillian Koller is an advocate for Hawaii's people and is approachable, open to new ideas and committed to providing the highest quality programs to those she serves.

Please support the confirmation of Lillian Koller as Director of Human Service (DHS).

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Kathy Morris

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair, Human Services and Public Housing Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 226
415 Stouth Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

FROM: Ann Rosegrant Alvarez, PhD, MSW

SUBJECT: Testimony for GM 275
Supporting Confirmation of DHS Director Lillian Koller
[Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 pm, Conf. Rm. 016]

DATE: April 2, 2007

I am writing in support of the reconfirmation of Lillian Koller as the Director of the State Department of Human Services. I am writing as a private citizen, and not in my professional capacity.

It is, however, through my work that I am familiar with Director Koller and the work she has done during her term as DHS Director. I am Director of Distance Education for the School of Social Work at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Director Koller has been very supportive of the work we have been doing to develop and establish a distance education option for neighbor island residents, which will allow them to pursue the MSW degree program while remaining in their home communities. The distance education option thus has important implications for access, for equity across the islands, and for workforce development in areas with critical issues and significant need for professional social work personnel and services.

I appreciate the strong support that Director Koller has shown for our Distance Education option, and for the School of Social Work as a whole. It has made a positive difference for us, and will continue to make a difference to neighbor island residents as we implement and expand on the important educational resource we are able to offer – thanks to the support of Director Koller and many others who have spoken and worked in its behalf.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Rosaline L. Tupou
94-336 Haaa Street
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

April 2, 2007

Honorable Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair of Human Services and Public Housing Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street, Room 226
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: GM 275 -- Testimony supporting confirmation for Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services

Dear Senator Chun Oakland, Senator Les Ihara Jr., and Committee members,

I am grateful for the opportunity to testify and express my very strong support to reconfirm Lillian B. Koller as the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

I have been with DHS – Social Services Division, Child Welfare Branch (SSD/CWSB) for 15 years, initially as a case manager, then a unit supervisor, and currently the Diamond Head Child Welfare Section Administrator (DHCWSSA). I have been in my current position for over 3 years. During my career with DHS during the past 15 years, I have been under 3 DHS Directors including Director Koller and I have never experienced such exceptional and incredible leadership in this agency until Director Koller. For the past four years, Director Koller has diligently dedicated her strengths and efforts into reforming CWS to improve services and outcomes for Hawaii's families.

As a CWS administrator, I would like to testify about what I see happening in the front line of CWS, and how Director Koller's reform of CWS has benefited not only the families and children we serve in Hawaii, but also the employees of CWS.

The implementation of the Differential Response System (DRS) was completed in or about October 2005. The DRS has allowed DHS to promptly response to intake reports, to assess and appropriately provide protective services to families and children. With the DRS, DHS has been able to strengthen its partnership with the community providers in addressing the issues of abuse/neglect of children in Hawaii. DRS have allowed the community providers to work with the families in low-moderate cases, with Family Strengthening and Voluntary Case Management Services, and allow DHS to truly service the high and severe cases. As a result, the intake caseload has dropped significantly for assessment workers. As a line supervisor in the past, I used to assign up to about 5 intakes per week to an assessment worker, which could easily translated into about 15-18 or more intakes per month for one worker. Since the implementation of the DRS, I have seen a drop in intakes assignment, to an average of about 7 – 8 intakes per month. The end results are – timely/more comprehensive assessment/ services to the families and children, and a morale booster for the staff. As a line supervisor in the past, we used to have such huge backlogs on cases without dispositions in 60 days, we used to have multiple pages listing these backlog cases, however, with the current DRS in place, the workers are much more able to timely dispose cases and provide services to the families, and our listing of backlog has almost disappeared. At this time, I can only say that if DRS was implemented 15

years ago, DHS-CWS would have been in a much better shape today. I strongly believe that in 3 – 5 years, CWS' caseload would be very manageable for both assessment workers as well as case managers. With a lower caseload, we would not only boost staff morale, but we would also be able to retain trained and experienced workers, not to mention improved services to our families.

The implementation on new Policies regarding Missing Children, Family Connection & Visitation, Kin Placement, and Ohana Conferences. Although some of these issues were practiced by workers in the past, CWS did not have any clear written policy regarding these. Under Koller's direction, clear written policies were implemented, such as reporting of missing children immediately, with a DHS has a website for missing children and a weekly reporting system for the whole State. The Kin-ship placement policy & family findings efforts is another example of clear written policy in which CWS workers must exhaust all efforts to locate relatives, on both maternal and paternal relatives for placement of children. As a line worker, I had always tried to locate relatives, however, there was no clear direction or policy in place which directed workers to locate relatives. With Koller's support, CWS has partnered with community providers in family findings efforts in acknowledging that children have rights to grow up and maintain connections with their birth family permanently. The Ohana Conference policy which gives birth families the rights to have an Ohana Conference done for their family. Social workers used to have that discretion on whether or not to refer families for an Ohana Conference in the past. With the full support of Director Koller, the families are now empowered with the opportunity to self-refer themselves to Epic where the solution to their families' problems could be discussed, and families can develop their service plan to resolve problems.

Director Koller has implemented many other changes in her efforts to reform/improve CWS services for Hawaii, in such a short period of time. As you are probably aware of, Hawaii DHS-CWS is under a Program Improvement Plan as mandated by the Federal Government. With Director Koller's direction, CWS workers were mandated to improve on these 4 areas 1) Timely response to Intake, 2) Maintain monthly face to face contacts with families, 3) Engaging the families in developing their service plan, 4) On-going assessment of children's safety. The federal government made it clear that each child, each foster parents, and birth parents were to be visited face to face by the assigned social worker on a monthly basis. I believe all social workers whole-heartedly agreed that these are good social work practices, however, many of the CWS workers including myself found it incredibly difficult to meet these expectations, primarily in my opinion due to the large caseload that workers were carrying. At this time, I can honestly say that although we have not meet these expectations 100%, workers and supervisors, have acknowledged how important it is that these practices/expectations continue, and that workers are doing their very best to meet these expectations. Director Koller implemented a Quality Review System for our cases that was never done before. In the past, we would wait for the Federal Reviewers to tell us what we did well and we need to improve on. Since Director Koller took the helm, we now for the very first time in the history of DHS-CWS we now have a mandated monthly supervisory review of random select cases for every CWS social worker in Hawaii, as well a Quality Review of cases randomly selected from each Section, very similar to the Federal Review.

Another change I believe has been very beneficial to all, is the courageous and fearless change that Director Koller made regarding the confidentiality rule in CWS. In 2004, DHS-CWS with the new Confidentiality Rule, DHS was finally able to release/disclose confidential information without consent or court order for State purposes. DHS is now able to share information with family members about children who are under DHS custody. For many years, as a line worker, when a relative would call and ask for information about their grandchild or

nephew or niece, I could not release the information without the parents' written consent or a court order. With the new rule, I believe DHS is now able to expedite search for relative placements, engage, encourage, and welcome the whole family to participate in resolving their family's problems, and not so much depend on one DHS social worker to make that decision. I believe we can all agree that the State alone cannot resolve the problems of abuse/neglect. To be successful in addressing the issues of child abuse/neglect, we must involve the whole family and that's including extended family and friends. I am so grateful that Director Koller had made this very brave change to the confidentiality rule, which allows CWS to be "transparent" to the family; thereby I believe improve our DHS-CWS image to the public.

Director Koller was successful in creating new support staff positions, to assist and ease workers workload. Many of these additional positions are support staff who assist workers with the daily operations, such as transporting children to visits, therapy, appointments, and such. In her efforts to invite/retain workers, she was successful in reclassifying CWS social workers, supervisors, and Section Administrators with an increase in SR level and in pay.

I would like to end my testimony with my sincere request for your assistance in re-confirming Director Koller. Although you may have heard that some of my close colleagues with their dissatisfaction with Director Koller's management style, I ask that you please review the outcome of DHS' during the past 4 years of Director Koller's leadership and management. The fruits of her work testify to Director Koller's work, and I believe the families and children of Hawaii will continue to reap its benefit in years to come. Her management style has made DHS/CWS not only accountable for the job that the public has entrusted us to do, but it has made our job easier with more collaboration and partnership with the community and with more services available to our families. I agree wholeheartedly, that under Director's Koller's leadership, many changes were made to DHS-CWS during such short time, however, I truly believe these changes were urgent and needed to be done immediately, in order for DHS to meet Federal mandates, but most importantly, to meet growing needs of our children & families. The State of Hawaii must expect DHS/CWS to be accountable for their services to the families of Hawaii. The State of Hawaii must support a leader that has the vision that is best-practice based and is out-come based. Please re-confirm Director Koller for a second term to fulfill her vision and mission for DHS. Thank you for this opportunity to testify and express my strong support of Lillian Koller.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosaline L. Tupou, MSW

TESTIMONY

LATE

April 1, 2007

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FROM: Joseph B. Borgo, ACSW

SUBJECT: GM 275, Confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as Director of the
Department of Human Services for a term to expire 12-6-2010

*Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol*

My name is Joseph Borgo and I come before you today to exhort you in the strongest possible terms to reconfirm Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services for a second term.

My motivation for doing so is my heartfelt conviction that Ms. Koller's continued leadership is vital and necessary to ensure that the Department is able to successfully consolidate and strengthen the many reforms that have taken place due to her initiatives over the last several years.

In more than 40 years of professional social work practice, I have had ample opportunity to observe and reflect on the qualities that make for outstanding leadership. As a senior executive and Chief Executive Officer in State government and in the not-for-profit sector, I have tried to embody those principles in my own practice with at-risk youth and their families. I have faced the challenges and pitfalls of implementing system reform not only as the person directly responsible for enacting the reforms, but also as a consultant to multiple State and County agencies across the country. In the latter capacity, I have worked in Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, California, and Hawaii.

What my many years of practice and reflection have taught me and what my personal experience of Ms. Koller's leadership confirms is her personification of the qualities of an outstanding transformational leader.

Warren G. Bennis, the pioneer in the field of leadership studies, among many pithy comments, notes: "The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it." He also writes: "The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why." He also observes: "Failing organizations are usually over-managed and under-led." I submit that part of the controversy surrounding Ms. Koller's leadership is due to the fact that the senior executives in the Department, including the Director, for many years prior to Ms. Koller assuming the mantle of leadership, have tried to be competent managers rather than transformational leaders. Ms. Koller has not shied away from challenging the status quo. She has questioned existing policies and practices to see whether they can be improved upon, resulting in more and better benefits for the children and families of Hawaii. Her determination to find a better way has resulted in millions of dollars in new Federal revenue, not only for her Department, but for the Attorney General and the Department of Health as well.

Her leadership has transformed Child Welfare Services from a program that spectacularly failed the Child and Family Services Review into a national example of innovation and system reform. She was able to accomplish this by freeing up her people to become leaders themselves. Managers who stagnated in the previous regime have risen to the challenge; have become champions of the change process themselves and leaders vis-à-vis their staff and their colleagues. Collectively they have transformed the agency. All this is due to Ms. Koller empowering them to be leaders instead of managers. As Bennis notes: "Good leaders make people feel that they're at the very heart of things, not at the periphery."

This change is fragile, however, because it is yet incomplete and because some in the agency are reticent to commit. All change (even positive change) is stressful and some seek to avoid stress at all costs. The early stages of change often lead to rising expectations where satisfaction actually declines until the change has become institutionalized and all the barriers to success have been eliminated. That is why Ms. Koller's ongoing leadership is critical. Unless the changes already undertaken are permitted to put down roots and to solidify, the system will revert to the previous homeostasis and it will be even more difficult to enact reform when next it is attempted.

Entropy is a fundamental law of physics. In social service agencies, the entropic condition is to run for the convenience of staff, rather than the convenience of clients.

This is reflected in hours of operation, ease of access, willingness to engage clients, *etc.* Unless one actively fights against it, entropy will prevail. Ms. Koller has led the way in combating the forces of entropy. This has been stressful for those comfortable with the status quo, but it is essential in order to reform the system and to keep it healthy and alive. Ms. Koller has recognized the challenge and has injected energy and resources into the system to combat complacency.

The hallmark of her leadership, however, has been Ms. Koller's fundamental commitment to doing the right thing. Like a laser beam, she is intensely focused on doing what is right for the vulnerable children and families of Hawaii, despite the political or organizational challenges that may present. She is passionate, steadfast and unwavering in that commitment. As the child of Holocaust survivors, she is particularly sensitive to and protective of the dignity and humanity of those whom society seeks to marginalize or exclude: the poor, the addicted, the vulnerable, those unable to fend for themselves.

This passion for excellence and for doing what is right is exactly what makes Ms. Koller such an extraordinary and exemplary leader. These are also the qualities necessary to complete the reforms already begun. Anything less will doom the reform to failure.

Professional colleagues I have spoken to in the community tell me that they have waited more than 20 years for the reforms that Ms. Koller has instituted. Their greatest fear (and mine as well) is that system will revert to the status quo ante. Bennis points out that: "Leadership is the wise use of power. Power is the capacity to translate intention into reality and to sustain it." The reform will not succeed unless Ms. Koller's leadership is there to sustain and nurture it.

To be sure, the Department of Human Services will soldier on if Ms. Koller is not reconfirmed. A golden opportunity for excellence, for transcending the limits of mediocrity, and for professional growth for all the Department's employees and community partners will be lost forever, alas! Ms. Koller's leadership has provided hope for all of us who share her ideals of client service and community capacity-building that this time things will indeed be different; this time the long sought changes will actually come true.

I implore you: "Do not let us down. Do not disappoint us once again. Vote to reconfirm Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services."

TESTIMONY

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public
Housing

FROM: Joe Cordova, Administrator, Vocational
Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind

SUBJECT: GM 275, Confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as
Director of the Department of Human Services for
a term to expire 12-6-2010

**Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol**

I strongly support the confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services for a second term.

Under the leadership of Director Koller, Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division of the Department of Human Services has made significant strides forward in improving the quality of services and program outcomes for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

Director Koller has challenged the Vocational rehabilitation system to develop creative ways of becoming more responsive to the needs of disabled consumers in order to assist disabled individuals in achieving their chosen vocational goal and in realizing their desire to become productive and self-sufficient members of the community.

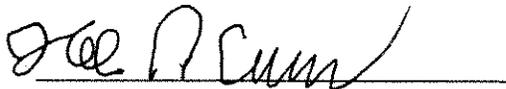
She has been highly supportive of our efforts to make system changes within the Vocational Rehabilitation Division that will empower both staff and consumers of services to achieve high quality employment outcomes and greater independence in the community.

She has introduced several promising initiatives to Vocational Rehabilitation including the implementation of a training program for coaching and mentoring of VR staff in the "empowerment model" of rehabilitation. We have already seen significant results in the increased level of independence for disabled consumers of services in a

relatively short period of time. She has also been responsible for initiating a self-employment effort within our Division in order to promote the concept of self-employment as a very viable option for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

Director Koller strongly believes in the abilities and capabilities of people with disabilities and she believes that, given good quality services and training and proper community supports, people with disabilities can become self-sufficient and contributing members of society. Director Koller has high expectations for the disability community and I believe you will continue to see even more positive results for Vocational Rehabilitation in the years ahead.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joe P. Cunningham", is written over a horizontal line.

TESTIMONY

March 30, 2007

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public
Housing

FROM: Jennifer Grant
[Print your name]

SUBJECT: GM 275, Confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as
Director of the Department of Human Services for
a term to expire 12-6-2010

Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

My name is Jennifer Grant and I strongly support the
[print your name]

confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as Director of the
Department of Human Services for a second term.

Attached is a copy of my previous letter dated

April, 6, 2007
[write date of your previous letter] that I sent to you.

I am now submitting my letter to you again as my official
testimony in strong support of Lillian B. Koller's
reconfirmation.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Jennifer Grant
[Sign your name and date]

The Honorable senator Chun-Oakland
Human Service and Public Housing Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 226
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Department of Human Service and Public Housing Committee,

My name is Jennifer Grant. I am a biological child of a foster parent. When I heard about Statewide Resource Families (SRF) Program and what it entails I was exhilarated. Just to hear that this program exists is quite gratifying. It is wonderful that Lillian B. Koller embraced this program. It is Mrs. Koller's ambition to open her arms to programs that help to care for Hawaii's keiki.

You might wonder how this program might be important to a biological child of a foster parent. For five years, my mother and I cared for foster children. Some of the children needed psychological counseling. However, there was never one person we could contact to inform the state of their needs. Seeing how Statewide Resource Families (SRF) Program is setup, it cuts the red tap that congests communication. Communication that is vital for the well-being of foster children.

On a personal note, Statewide Resource Families (SRF) Program assesses the welfare of the biological child, as well as the foster child. This again is essential for a positive outcome of a foster family placement. SRF assessment team has created questions that can help with the needs of the biological child as well. As a former biological child, I feel this is crucial. In my past, I have had occasion that I had trouble with a foster child that was close to my age. I felt uncomfortable in confronting my mother. I wished there was a second individual that I could have talked you.

One final note on the influential and critical need for Statewide Resource Families (SRF) Program, this program enables foster children to have a positive future with a voice. A voice that should be heard not ignored. During those years as a biological foster child, we cared for three little girls, for five years. The state could not find the biological parents and never informed them of visitation dates. In the last year, the biological parents took the state to court for custody back. As the biological child of the foster parent, I knew how the girls were afraid of their mother. During the one visit that did occur, the girls ran out of the room, down the street and banged on the window to the car. The mother's reaction was to call them brats. The court awarded the children back to the biological parents. Within a month, the middle child was thrown out of a 6-story window. This action devastated my mother and I. The child had no voice, the foster parent had no voice, and I had no voice. Statewide Resource Families (SRF) Program gives the foster parent, the foster child and the biological child a microphone to voice out concerns. To voice out concerns that might look minuscule but in long run have huge consequences.

I am more ecstatic that this program exists. The creation of S.T.A.R., Surviving Transition and Reconciliation will be great addition to the SRF program. The program helps to endorse appreciation and a bond between the foster child and biological child. This is a key component that is the foundation of a positive foster family placement. I am happy to have volunteered for the creation of this program. Joy Lacanienta has a great vision of the full picture that is needed, to create a supportive community for everyone that is a member of the foster care system. Lillian B. Koller has the ambition and determination to have the best program available for Hawaii's keiki. The partnership of Joy Lacanienta and Lillian B. Koller will benefit the foster parents, foster child, biological foster child the assessment workers and licensing workers. This vision will make a difference, a life difference for many involved. More than we will ever know. It is empowering to see so many individuals support this program. To hear the voice of change from all directions and to be part of the movement toward a better future is life alternating.

March 30, 2007

A saying comes to mind when I think about the many lives that SRF program will touch.

"Man dies when he refuses to stand up for that which is right. A man dies when he refuses to take a stand for that which is true. So we are going stand up right here....letting the world know we are determined to be free."
(Dr.Martin-Luther King)

This is the voice of the children. If there is not a microphone for the children, like SRF, Joy La Lacanienta and Lillian B. Koller, we are allowing the children to wither away, with no future. How can a child stand up for what is right or true, when he/she has no voice.

Sincerely,


Jennifer Grant

Chairwoman Suzanne Chun Oakland
Human Services and Public Housing Committee
415 South Beretania Street
State Capitol Room 226
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

April 2, 2007

Dear Chairwoman Chun Oakland,

I am writing in strong support of the confirmation of Lillian Koller, Director of Human Services. Under her leadership, the Department of Human Services (DHS) has secured over \$160,000,000 in federal funds with the help of the Lingle-Aiona Administration to help uninsured adults and children pay for their medical care and also to help both public and private hospitals cover the cost of uninsured patients. Additionally, DHS received an additional \$5,000,000 from the Lingle-Aiona Administration to expand early childhood education, which has added 600 extra preschool slots statewide. Furthermore, DIIS has started a pilot project - Discovery Health Connection Web, a joint venture between DIIS and Lt. Gov. Aiona, which seeks to increase young people's awareness about such topics as: alcohol and drug abuse, violence prevention, and physical health and personal safety.

But what places DHS in the limelight most often is Child Welfare Services, also known as Child Protective Services. Under her direction Child Welfare Services has implemented a Differential Response system that offers families that are considered a low to moderate risk assistance through services providers statewide. These service providers focus on strengthening the family unit and providing the various skills to help parents and children deal with everyday issues. DHS has also increased its efforts in the recruiting and training of foster parents. In November 2004, DHS helped Partner-In-Development Foundation obtain a \$715,000 grant to recruit more Hawaiians to be foster parents for Hawaiian children, who make up more than 50% of our state's foster children.

Although these are just some of the accomplishments that DHS has made during Ms. Koller's 4 years as Director of the Department of Human Services, it is telling of her commitment of the social and economic needs of the people of Hawaii. I, therefore, believe that Lillian Koller should be confirmed for a second term as Director of the Department of Human Services.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jonathan Tungpalan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jonathan Tungpalan
Human Services Professional II

John L. Reppun
C/o 47-200 Waihe'e Rd.
Kane'ohe, O'ahu, HI 96744

March 30, 2007

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Human Services and Public Housing Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 226
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Re: Hearing – Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing –
Tuesday, April 3, 2007 at 1:15 pm; Conference Room 016**

**Testimony Relating to GM 275 - supporting reconfirmation of DHS Director
Lillian B. Koller**

Dear Senator Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Les Ihara & Committee Members:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony. While I may not be able to attend the subject committee meeting in person, I would like to express my support for the reconfirmation of Ms. Lillian B. Koller as Director of the State Department of Human Services. My testimony is my own, and not that of the agency I work for. This said my experience as Executive Director of KEY Project - a Windward Oahu non-profit agency - leads me to step forward with support.

KEY Project, like many other agencies in the field of social and general community service, works most closely with the youth of our area – all of whom are both “in-need” and “at risk” if only because of their proximity to risk factors such as the epidemic-scale use of “ice”, in combination with incredible economic and social pressures that families are experiencing. Our semi-rural community is witness to an ever-widening disparity between those in need and those who can afford...housing, food, transportation, services, health coverage, education, and recreation.

We all struggle to support the array of programs we need, including non-school hour activities (and attendant supervision, mentors), and educational enhancement in areas such as culture and the arts. With the latter KEY has been a beneficiary, through the State Foundation for Culture and the Arts, of the use of TANF funds – an excellent resolution to funding cuts made a couple of years ago for such activities. As a whole community, together with government leadership, we will be wise to continue to explore ways in which State and County alike might better leverage available Federal funds. In this vein, Ms. Koller provides hope.

Ms. Koller clearly shares the deep concerns that agencies such as ours have for identifying continued, reliable sources of funding. She brings a fresh view and an

energized perspective to the challenge of providing services to the clientele we serve: youth at risk, native Hawaiians (our area exhibits a substantial representation of this group), and those in need of better health services and more. In my admittedly limited, direct interaction with Ms. Koller, I have nonetheless come away refreshed by her tangible sincerity, positively charged by her "can-do" perspective and, most-of-all, convinced that her dedication to progress is not self-serving.

I urge your committee's favorable consideration with her bid for re-confirmation – and the opportunity to "stay the course" with regard to her strategy in addressing human services on behalf of our state.

Mahalo,
John L. Reppun
Windward Resident

Testimony GM 275
Committee of Human Services and Public Housing

Submitting testimony in support of Confirmation of Gubernatorial Nominee Lillian Koller, Esq. as the Director of Department of Human Services for a term to expire 12.6.2010

To: Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Honorable Les Ihara, Vice Chair
And Honorable Committee Members

My name is Gigi Abel and I am President of ABEL Case Management, Inc. I am also an R.N Case Manager. I urge you to please confirm Ms. Lillian Koller as the Director of Human Services for a second term. My work with the Residential Alternatives Community Care Program (RACCP)-also known as the Adult Foster Family Program- in which we care for Hawaii's frail elderly would not be as successful a program without the enlightened leadership provided by Director Koller.

Under Director Koller, the numbers of our elderly served have grown while the cost savings to the state have been immense. Placement in a RACCP home costs around \$2,400 per month. In a nursing home, if a bed is available, the cost to the State of Hawaii is around \$6500 per month. This figures to an annual savings to the State Medicaid program around \$70,000 per year per person served. With the estimated population of 1400 individuals currently in the RACC program, that represents a savings to the State of Hawaii of over \$95,000,000. Director Koller led the reform by requiring all applicants to access already available Social Security monies which had, in the past, gone unclaimed.

Director Koller has instituted several measures that have been friendly to small business owners such as me, who have made a commitment to the State of Hawaii to provide Case Management services as required by the Federal Government. She helped by reevaluating requirements needed to maintain our state contracts. If left as they were, it would have meant that many agencies providing these services would have been unable to afford to remain in business. This included allowing agencies to work on all islands under one contract. An example of this allowed my company to provide services on Oahu and Maui and assist Maui Memorial

Our agency was the first to use Director Koller's "Going Home Project" and our client, "Mrs. J", was able to leave the hospital, an institutional setting, and move to a family home.. Mrs. J had been in the hospital for months, and could not be admitted to the RACC program because she was about \$100 over the maximum monthly income. This inability to move Mrs. J was costing the State of Hawaii many thousands of dollars. Her transfer to the family environment provided by the Foster Home Caregiver not only increased her quality of life but immediately began saving the State of Hawaii resources that could be better spent on people who need the inpatient services of a hospital. To date we have used this specific program repeatedly with great savings

and, more importantly better outcomes and an increased quality of life for the elderly person in need.

I strongly urge you to give Director Koller four more years to continue her very important and very successful role as Director of the Department of Human Services.

With Aloha,

Marjorie (Gigi) Abel, R.N.
President
ABEL Case Management, Inc
info@abelcmi.com
(808) 486-7914

Carole Ann Torikawa
3320 Paalea Street
Honolulu, HI 96816

April 2, 2007

Honorable Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair of Human Services and Public Housing Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street, Room 226
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: GM 275 – Testimony supporting confirmation for Lillian B. Koller as
Director of the Department of Human Services

~~Hearing Date: Tuesday, April 3, 2007~~
Time: 1:15PM
Place: Capitol, Conference Room 016

Dear Senator Chun Oakland and Committee MEMBERS:

I am writing in strong support to reconfirm Lillian B. Koller as the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

I have been working for 10 plus years. with the help of other people, to create an emergency shelter called "The Christmas Box House" for the children of Hawaii. I recently got word that this emergency facility concept will be created in the very near future. With Lillian Koller's leadership and perseverance to help the children of Hawaii, it will materialize.

In am in strong support to reconfirm Lillian B. Koller as the Director of the Department of Human Services. Her leadership and skills to help the children of the State of Hawaii has been seen and heard from the various media. She epitomizes the leadership to look out for the well-being of children and families, help protect children from harm, and help families and children in crisis.

I realize that leaders like Lillian Koller, will make a difference for future generations for the children of Hawaii. Children are so pure and should not be tainted in any way. If we stop the cycle of child abuse, then we would have "Made A Difference".

Honorable Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Page Two

Director Koller should be reconfirmed for a second term. We need her to continue her remarkable work efforts. I know that you hold a place in your heart in helping children from child abuse so you can understand how important a role that she will play for the State of Hawaii.

Though I have no professional experience or schooling, I am a grandmother with three grandchildren and I would do anything within my power to stop child abuse. I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of Lillian Koller's reconfirmation.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carole Ann Torikawa

TESTIMONY

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public
Housing

FROM: Timothy S. Kitagawa, Section Administrator
Department of Human Services
Adult & Community Care Services Branch
East Hawaii Section

SUBJECT: GM 275, Confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as
Director of the Department of Human Services for
a term to expire 12-6-2010

Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2007, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

I support the confirmation of Lillian B. Koller as Director of the Department of Human Services for a second term.

A new and progressive direction within the Department has been it's involvement in establishing the first Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) in the State of Hawaii. Through collaboration between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, twelve (12) state grants were made available to develop a "one stop shop" for consumers to learn about available long term care services and to streamline access within our current fragmented service system.

Through initiatives by Director Koller, the Department of Human Services, in collaboration with the State Executive Office of Aging, brought to the State of Hawaii this federal grant. Under the avid support of the Hawaii County Mayor, Harry Kim and undertaking by the Hawaii County Area Agency on Aging, Hilo, Hawaii became the selected site for the development of the State's first ADRC.

Director Koller has since designated the Adult & Community Care Services Branch - East Hawaii Section

Office, responsible for the administration of a variety of home & community based services to the chronically ill or disabled, as well as dependent adult protective services to be a part of this ADRC upon it's completed construction in 2008. The Department, along with 7 other agencies from the State, County and Private Sector will occupy the center and develop a comprehensive long term care model for the State to provide consumers access to services from a single coordinated point of entry.

It is such action which speaks to Director Koller's dedication to serving our most vulnerable and needy populations and her bold leadership to act upon bringing positive change, rather than reacting to needed changes within an established system.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



Timothy S. Kitagawa

3-30-07
Date

Susan J. Moss

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March 31, 2007

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Human Services and Public Housing Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 226
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Testimony for GM275 supporting reconfirmation of DHS director Lillian Koller

Dear Senator Chun:

The reappointment of Lillian Koller to DHS director has direct impact on the welfare of children and families of Waimea (Kamuela), where I live.

Let me give you a little history of my family's involvement with Child Welfare Services. My grandchildren were taken into CPS custody in 2003 and it took two years of legal action to release them back into our family.

Because of this experience, I saw the total power this organization has over families. I also saw how poorly managed and trained the workers were on the West side of the Big Island. Our family learned a lot about the 'system' through our experience and because of this, other families in the community were referred to us for help on how to get their children or grandchildren 'out of the system'.

I immediately saw the limitations of my effectiveness in helping families on my own so formed a group of professionals who work with Child Welfare Services. Our little group is made up of two social workers from support organizations, a retired child psychologist, a retired prosecuting attorney, a family court attorney, a foster parent, and an administrator of a health and wellness organization, and me, a former licensed foster parent and grandparent of children formerly in CWS custody.

Through the eyes of this group, I was able to see just how dysfunctional our West Side CWS was. But it was also through this group that I saw how effective it could be. About six to eight months ago, we had the newly appointed head of CWS, on the Big Island, join our group. She was brought onto the island by Lillian Koller to make our West Hawaii offices function better.

In just a few months, I have seen dramatic changes in how CWS behaves with our families. I saw immediate intervention by this administrator to circumvent ingrained behavior that was ripping our families apart instead of keeping them together. She

intervened in a case that actually kept the family together and had CWS work with the family as a unit, instead of pulling the kids out, which has to create long term emotional problems for the children.

It is a requirement of the Project Improvement Plan (PIP) set up by the federal government, to keep the families together at a greater percentage than was happening in Hawaii. This hasn't been happening on our island.

In our family, our grandchildren were kept away from their family for two years! For one this was from age 5-7 for the other age 7-9. These are formative years for these kids, and they were bounced between several foster families. These are years that parents and extended family members should be teaching them what they need for the rest of their lives. I worry about the emotional problems our grandchildren do have and will have as a result of being yanked from their family unit; the only security they knew.

If the social worker on our case had had more training (we were her first case) and closer supervision (her supervisor was one hour away by car), she would have known more about family dynamics and realized that the parents were in the middle of a custody decision with the courts. In fact, the then West Side chief administrator told me on the phone that she thought this was a custody battle and the kids should have never been taken. (She is no longer employed by CWS.)

The rearranging of the West Side CWS offices, to have effective leaders, accountably of the workers, better and closer supervision of the workers is a direct mandate from Ms. Koller. As a resident of the West Side, I have only accolades for what she has begun to do here and fear that it won't be completed if she is not reinstated to continue the work she and her associates have begun.

Please, for the sake of our families on the West Side of the island of Hawaii, reconfirm Ms. Koller so that she can continue the excellent changes she has started.

Regards,



Susan J. Moss

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

~~HEARING, CONFERENCE ROOM 016 FOR TUESDAY APRIL 3, 2007, 1:15PM~~

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF CONFIRMATION as Director of the
Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, LILLIAN B.
KOLLER, for a term to expire 12-6-2010. GM 275**

NEIGHBOR ISLAND ORAL TESTIMONY

Chair Chun-Oakland and Committee members:

My name is: J. William "Bill" Sanborn. I speak as a resident of Waimea, island of Hawai'i, a concerned grandparent, a licensed and previously active foster care provider, a West Hawai'i and Waimea community volunteer, a participant for Departmental case reviews for the West Hawai'i CWS section and a current member of the State CWS Continuing Quality Improvement Council.

I testify today in support the Director's confirmation in order to continue, what I see as much progress on behalf of the children of this state. The huge task for the Department of Human Services is sorting out real harm issues as well as providing real assistance for repair, growth and harmony every family in this state can rely on when confronted with serious personal challenges - challenges such as falling into drugs, alcohol, career and housing stress or health issues that can lead to increases in all forms of abuse within the families when they are least capable of coping with it.

Although our family's past personal "case" with CWS (formerly known as CPS) and the Family Court has been settled and most would have put a lot of distance between any State agency and themselves after such an ordeal, to me, the thought that others not so fortunate to have the financial, networking, education

background that could alter the immediate observations. Although our family needed some intervention, it was clear after several months that we just had a "tooth ache" not "cancer" of the jaw. Ours was a custody related complaint and under today's CWS system of intakes, it would have been referred to services first rather than becoming one more crisis case for the social worker to juggle, and not juggle with either correct training, supervision or assumptions.

The turning point in our case was our ability to afford to depose the case worker twice. This allowed us to point out the multiple lies, filtered information leading only to a specific outcome, and already predestined results decided by one worker and with little intervention by the superiors due to their reactionary approach to their own overload as well.

What has changed during Director Koller's tenure has been how cases are handled from the get-go. Diversion on the non-emergency complaints has not only allowed less serious cases to be directed to immediate services but has relieved the social worker's stress level to a much more manageable level of providing more consistent services, visitations and outcomes in their intervention. This has helped to reduce any need to "fudge" reports, get trapped in deceitful courses of actions or take short cuts at the expense of the children and their families.

I will summarize by drawing attention to my past contact with former State Representative Kahikina from Waianae and his thoughts then. His lament in 2003 was that most human services issues fall below the radar of most of the public. Knowledge of what really happens is usually only available to those that are or have "experienced" the system or the workers and support services dealing with the State agency as well as the "clients". Even getting the legislature to understand what really happens in these cases and the needs leading to funding requests and changes in practices was difficult at best.

After working with Director Koller on this issue, I had cause to testify again in Waimea in 2006 and heard then Representative Kahikina say at that hearing that he no longer had constituent complaints from families from Waianae involved with CWS, only an occasional social worker complaint.

This, in my mind, is a huge change and improvement in the system outcome under Director Koller. It means that the Department is addressing the issues and concerns in a manner that has changed the perception of those in services and those most needing intervention – the children. After all that section is called “Child Welfare” Services. There is no room for adult issues clouding what is best for the children and their families in my opinion.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of confirmation.

Mahalo and Aloha,

J. William “Bill” Sanborn
P.O. Box 190
Kamuela, HI 96743

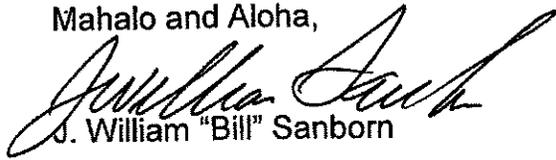
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Thank you for considering my testimony in support of confirmation.

Mahalo and Aloha,



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