

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 671, RELATING TO VETERANS SERVICES

PRESENTATION TO THE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS & MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN
DIRECTOR OF STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

January 30, 2019
10:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Gates, and members of the Committee:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony **in support with recommended amendments** for House Bill 671.

This measure provides that a surviving unmarried same-sex partner of a deceased Veteran (who meets all established Veterans Affairs internment eligibility criterion) may be interred at any State or National Veterans Cemetery if the surviving partner provides evidence that the couple would have married but for a State law prohibiting same-sex marriage. In the cited case in the proposed measure of Nancy Lynchild and subsequent written petition from her same-sex partner Lt Col Linda Campbell to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (SECVA), a waiver was granted and precedent set by the SECVA based on evidence of a committed relationship between Nancy Lynchild and the eligible Veteran.

Therefore, recommend page 3 section 4-8 lines underscored be amended to read: **provided that a surviving, unmarried, same-sex partner of a deceased Veteran may be interred at any State or National Veterans Cemetery if the surviving partner provides written evidence and a formal request for waiver to the SECVA that the couple would have married but for a State law prohibiting same-sex marriage.**

We defer to the federal agency with direct responsibility for implementation and approval.

The OVS supports the intent expressed in this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families.



January 25, 2019

House's Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street, Room 430
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, January 30, 2019 – 10:30 a.m.

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for House Bill 671 – RELATING TO VETERANS SERVICES

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Gates and fellow committee members,

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT for House Bill 671 on behalf of the LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i. HB 671 provides that a surviving unmarried same-sex partner of a deceased veteran may be interred at any state veterans cemetery if the surviving partner provides evidence that the couple would have married but for a state law prohibiting same-sex marriage.

For a generation lesbian, gay & bisexual (LGB) service members had to service our country in silence. Then with the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) LGB service members were able to serve out and proud. At the time that DADT was repealed there were approximately 13,000 LGB people serving on active duty (comprising 0.9% of all active duty personnel) with nearly 58,000 serving in the various guard and reserve forces (3.4%) [per the Williams Institute](#).

Prior to the repeal DADT coupled LGB service members were denied the rights and privileges their straight counterparts had. While this bill will not right all the injustices that our brave LGB services members faced it will allow them to be buried with their partners.

The LGBT Caucus hopes that you all will honor these LGB service members service and pass HB 671.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.
Chair

HB-671

Submitted on: 1/25/2019 10:27:54 PM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Golojuch	Rainbow Family 808	Support	Yes

Comments:

As both a Director of Rainbow Family 808 and a veteran, I strongly support HB671. It is correct that we recognized that the spouses of our same-gendered couples when marriage was not recognized. This is just a small repayment for couples who could not publicly display their relationship and suffered both emotionally and financially, because their union had not been officially recognized by unconstitutional laws and rules.

Please pass HB671. Thank you.

Michael Golojuch, Sr., Lt Col, USAF(Ret)

Secretary, Rainbow Family 808



O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities (OCCLP)

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS & MILITARY AFFAIRS

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, January 30, 2019

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 430 State Capitol

RE: HB 671 Relating to Veterans Services

Aloha mai kakou Members of the House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans and Military Affairs:

The O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities (OCCLP) of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i (DPH) hereby submits its testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 671 relating to Veterans Services.**

HB 671 provides that a surviving unmarried same-sex partner of a deceased veteran may be interred at any state veterans cemetery if the surviving partner provides evidence that the couple would have married but for a state law prohibiting same-sex marriage.

Our country has a sacred, moral responsibility to keep faith with all our veterans and wounded warriors. We must take care of those who have their lives on the line to defend us. That is why we will push for more educational benefits and job training, end chronic homelessness and combat suicide, and protect and preserve the post-9/11 G.I. Bill for future generations. We will also ensure that reservists and Guard members are treated fairly when it comes to employment health, education benefits, deployment, and reintegration.

DPH will fight for every veteran to have timely access to high-quality health care and timely processing of claims and appeals. We must also look for more ways to make certain the VA provides veteran-centric care, such as providing women with full and equal treatment, including reproductive health services; expanding mental health programs; continuing effort to identify and treat invisible, latent, and toxic wounds of war; treating post-traumatic stress; and

expanding the post-9/11 veteran's caregiver program to include all veterans. *Democratic Party of Hawai'i Platform (2018), p. 22, ln. 17-29.*

In this same light, providing that a surviving unmarried same-sex partner of a deceased veteran may be interred at any state veterans cemetery if the surviving partner provides evidence that the couple would have married but for a state law prohibiting same-sex marriage, appears just, reasonable and deserving.

For the foregoing reasons, OCCLP supports HB 671 and urges its passage out of the Committee on Public Safety, Veterans and Military Affairs.

Mahalo nui loa
Me ka `oia`i`o

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja

Chair, O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i

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HB-671

Submitted on: 1/26/2019 8:49:16 PM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Steve Canales	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Strongly Support

From: David Smoot, House District 26

HAWAII STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS & MILITARY AFFAIRS

&

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

&

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Testimony supporting House Bill 671

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

10:30am

Conference Room 430

Aloha Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Committee members.

I'm David Smoot of District 26, and I'm testifying in strong support of HB671 "Veterans Services; State Veterans Cemeteries".

First, I think the public supports spousal burial at state veterans cemeteries.

If the primary opposition to this bill is financial, I suggest that the cost is worth honoring the love and loyalty of the marriage, regardless of whether or not the marriage was recognized in the past.

I am a US Navy veteran who was engaged to form a Domestic Partnership in Oregon with veteran Marine Sgt Robert Hatfield when he died of complications from exposure to Agent Orange. Sgt Hatfield is buried in Willamette National Cemetery. At the time, state law prohibited same-sex marriage, but our relationship had been ongoing for more than a decade.

No loving, committed couple should be denied spousal burial rights simply because of our history of discrimination in marriage law.

I urge you to vote to advance HB671 to the floor.

Thank you for the opportunity to show my support for HB671.

Sincerely,
David Smoot

HB-671

Submitted on: 1/27/2019 12:01:52 PM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joshua Kay	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

In strong support.

HB-671

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 8:18:01 AM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carlos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support for those who served in the military should not be restricted based on anything other than their characterization of service.

HB-671

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 3:28:35 PM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Teri Heede	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-671

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 2:39:18 AM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Randy Gonce	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

HB-671

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 9:13:15 PM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan Oppie	Individual	Support	No

Comments: