

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

917

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 19 2015

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 511

Honorable Donna Mercado Kim
President of the Senate
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2015
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Human Services and Housing, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 511, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

G.M. No. 511 RACHAEL WONG,
for a term to expire 12-3-2018,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee has reviewed the personal statement and resume submitted by the nominee and finds Rachael Wong to possess the requisite qualifications to be nominated as the Director of Human Services.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination of Rachael Wong from the Governor; Department of Budget and Finance; Department of Health; Department of Agriculture; Department of Transportation; Hawaii Public Housing Authority; John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawaii; School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, University of Hawaii at Manoa; AlohaCare; Ann Pearl Rehabilitation and Healthcare; Castle Home Care; Catholic Charities Hawaii; Child and Family Service; Enterprise Honolulu; Garden Isle Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center; Good Beginnings Alliance; Goodwill Industries of Hawaii, Inc.; Hale Kupuna Heritage Home; Harold K.L. Castle Foundation; Hawaii Health Information Corporation; Hawaii Medical Association; Hawaii Pacific Health; Hawaii Pacific University; Hawaii State Center for Nursing; Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition; Health, Humor, and Hospitals; Healthcare Association of Hawaii; Hospice

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Hawaii; Hawaii Primary Care Association; Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children; Kokua Mau; Lanakila Pacific; Louis Pohl Gallery; Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; Mental Health America of Hawaii; Ohana Pacific Management Company, Inc.; Pali Momi Medical Center; Pono Pacific; Prime Care Services Hawaii, Inc.; Puuwai O Makaha; Schlack Ito; Straub Clinic and Hospital; The Queen's Health Systems; United Public Workers; Wilcox Memorial Hospital; 6 Pillars Marketing; AT&T; PHOCUSED; and fifty-seven individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Wong's background, leadership experience, and commitment to improving the health and well-being of the community qualify her for appointment as the Director of Human Services. Your Committee notes that Ms. Wong has extensive experience in the public health field, serving in organizational leadership positions for almost eight years and obtaining Master's and Doctorate degrees in public health. She also has received numerous awards and was a regional finalist for the White House Fellows Program, one of the nation's most prestigious programs for leadership and public service.

Your Committee finds that Ms. Wong has proven herself to be a hard-working, competent, and fair leader. She has effectively led multiple organizations in the public health field, including Kokua Mau, a Hawaii hospice and palliative care organization, and the Hawaii Consortium for Integrative Healthcare. Most recently, Ms. Wong served as Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Healthcare Association of Hawaii. During her tenure at Healthcare Association of Hawaii, Ms. Wong led efforts to develop a statewide community health needs assessment, the first of its kind because it was the product of collaboration of all state hospitals and a partnership between a hospital association and a public health agency. This effort involved various community stakeholders, acute care providers, and the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, and ultimately highlighted the greatest existing healthcare needs in the community. As a result of the community health needs assessment, a plan was developed to better guide healthcare providers and government agencies to strategically address gaps in chronic disease prevention and behavioral health across the State.

Your Committee notes that Ms. Wong's dedication to her work and devotion to the well-being of the community is demonstrated by nearly twenty years of health and wellness experience working in Hawaii. Through her professional and volunteer experience,



including participation on numerous task forces, advisory groups, and committees, Ms. Wong has established extensive contacts throughout the community. Throughout her various roles, Ms. Wong has consistently found ways to build bridges, create community, and find solutions through teamwork and collaboration. Known for her great respect and commitment to collaborative efforts, Ms. Wong describes collaborative leadership as one of her strongest attributes that she implements by engaging all stakeholders, bringing together various departments and government entities, and establishing public-private partnerships to address issues and seek innovations.

Your Committee further finds that Ms. Wong has earned the highest level of respect in both her personal and professional life. Testifiers commented at length on Ms. Wong's high level of integrity, her collaborative approach to problem-solving, and her ability to bring out the best in other people by believing in their value. In addition to Ms. Wong's contributions at Healthcare Association of Hawaii by broadening the agency's scope to include public health and increase community partnerships, testimony from Ms. Wong's peers indicate that under her leadership the organization grew to be a more efficient, enjoyable, and healthy place to work. Your Committee received testimony describing Ms. Wong as a realist when approaching problems, but also an optimist who believes that creating a caring and open culture will motivate people to work together for the common good.

Your Committee believes that the nominee's demonstrated commitment to the health and well-being of Hawaii's most disadvantaged populations is an important quality for the Director of Human Services to have and will allow Ms. Wong to further the Department's mission. Ms. Wong's efforts to increase Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements for Hawaii, increase federal support for migrants living in Hawaii under the Compacts of Free Association, and integrate health and human services to address social determinants of health will all help prepare Ms. Wong to serve as the Director of Human Services. As stated in her personal statement, Ms. Wong's vision for the Department is that bold initiatives and transformative programs are created and implemented to collaboratively improve community health. She believes that the Department can become more efficient by utilizing technology, streamlining business processes, and providing staff with opportunities for increased time efficiencies and productivity. She believes in investing in staff through training, organizational capacity-building, and clear leadership.



Your Committee finds that Ms. Wong has the appropriate balance of experience, education, dedication to public service, and vision necessary to succeed in the role of Director of Human Services.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services and Housing that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, has found the nominee to be qualified for the position to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Human Services and
Housing,


SUZANNE CHUN OAKLAND, Chair



The Senate
 Twenty-Eighth Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Human Services and Housing
HSH
Advise and Consent

Governor's Message No.:* GM 511	Committee Referral: HSH	Date: 03/05/2015		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision				
The Recommendation is:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advise and Consent 2340 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Advise and Consent 2345				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
CHUN OAKLAND, Suzanne (C)	✓			
GREEN, Josh (VC)	✓			
HARIMOTO, Breene	✓			
RIVIERE, Gil	✓			
SLOM, Sam				✓
TOTAL	4	0	0	1
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
<i>Josh Green</i>				
Distribution:				
Original File with Committee Report	Yellow Clerk's Office	Pink Drafting Agency	Goldenrod Committee File Copy	

*Only one Governor's Message per Record of Votes