

**March 28, 2019**

**To: Mr. Karl Rhoads, Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary**

**From: Jon K. Matsuoka, Nominee to Hawai`i Commission on Civil Rights**

**Per: Questions from Senate Committee on Judiciary**

1. My understanding of the role of the HCRC

The HCRC was enacted by the State of Hawai`i Legislature in 1988-1989. The charge of the HCRC is basically to insure the rights of all citizens and examine claims of discrimination based on race, gender, religion, and ancestry in areas of employment, housing, and the public domain. The HCRC can hold hearings and has legal authority to operate in ways similar to a court proceeding. The two primary functions involve policymaking and adjudication. In terms of actual cases considered, a large majority of them relate to employment and pay equity while most of the rest relate to housing matters.

2. My role and responsibility as a member of HCRC

If confirmed I would be one of 5 members of the HCRC and be authorized to review, investigate, and make decisions on complaints regarding discrimination -- including efforts to conciliate disputes.

3. Why do I wish to serve as a member of the HCRC?

I heard there was a vacancy on the Commission and decided to apply.

My interest in serving is drawn from an extensive professional and personal background on civil rights that can be applied to assessing and making fair decisions on discrimination claims. In a small way I would like to be a part of promoting a just and civil society in Hawai`i.

4. Why am I qualified to be a Commissioner?

As a third generation Japanese American born and raised in South Central Los Angeles, my life generally centered around civil rights matters. During the second World War my grandparents and parents were dispossessed of home and belongings and placed in relocation camps. I came of age at the height of the Civil Rights Movement and in an effort to desegregate the public school system was bused to a school outside my home district. Going away to college meant literally overnight moving from the inner city to the free speech movement and social and environmental activism. Throughout my

college years I headed various Asian American and Pacific Islander student groups and coalitions and participated in curricular programs designed for ethnic minorities.

Upon completing graduate studies I assumed a faculty post at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and developed a program of research pertaining to sociocultural impacts of development on rural Native Hawaiian communities. My academic work also took me to places throughout the Pacific including the Republic of Palau where I established strong ties. We also fostered a Palauan girl while she attended high school in Hawai'i. Following my career in academe I became head of the Consuelo Foundation that served Native Hawaiian and Filipino families and communities. I continue to serve as a director on non-profit boards including Native Hawaiian Legal Corp, InPeace (Native Hawaiian Education), Papakolea Community Development Corp, Project Dana (elderly services), and have resided in the homestead community of Papakolea for 23 years.

5. What do I hope to accomplish as a commissioner?

Basically to be an actively involved member who deliberates with others on the Commission to insure that citizen rights are protected from discrimination. I also feel that I bring a deep and sophisticated understanding of cultural and political processes related to discrimination.

6. What issues has the HCRC handled well in the past? What should they address in the future?

As mentioned previously, most of the cases are employment related with a fair amount specifically focused on equal pay. I believe housing will continue to be an issue and social movements have brought gender and immigration matters to the fore of public awareness. Issues related to hostile workplace environment and harassment, gender identity, and the treatment of immigrants and language will likely play out before the Commission.

7. Any conflicts of interest:

I sit on several non-profit boards and have a long history at UHM and in the philanthropic sector. In reading background cases I recognized names of people I have known professionally. If there appears through relationships or affiliation to be a conflict of interest I would readily recuse myself from any deliberation. I do not have any conflicts regarding finance or assets.

8. Additional information?

No



**Testimony in support of GM 651: Jon Matsuoka to the Hawaii Civil rights Commission**

Hawai'i State Legislature, Room 016  
10am April 10, 2019

Submitted by Amy Agbayani, co-chair  
Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights (HFCR)

Chair Rhodes, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the committee

HFCR supports civil rights, diversity and inclusion. HFCR strongly supports Dr. Jon Matsuoka to be appointed to the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission. My strong recommendation for Dr. Matsuoka is informed by my decades of professional and community service in the area of civil rights. I was honored to serve as the founding chair of the Civil Rights Commission and Emeritus Assistant Vice Chancellor for student diversity. I have worked with Jon Matsuoka on many campus and community projects for many years and am confident he will be a responsible member of the Commission because he understands our community and civil rights laws.

As Director of Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity at UH Manoa, I worked closely with Dr. Matsuoka when he was faculty member, dean of the Myron B. Thompson School of Social work and President of the Consuelo foundation. He has always connected his academic work with praxis and community service. He has a deep understanding of cultural, economic and historical issues facing Native Hawaiians as well as other under-served and marginalized communities. His training and experience working with policies, programs and institutions will be useful to the HCRC. I am impressed with his integrity, knowledge, professionalism and commitment to social justice and equal rights.

I want to take this opportunity to publically thank him for his extensive community service with multiple non-profit organizations and demonstrated commitment to equal access and civil rights. I respectfully request you approve the nomination Jon Matsuoka to the Civil Rights Commission.



**GM-651**

Submitted on: 4/10/2019 8:34:55 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/10/2019 10:00:00 AM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Alan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I testify in support of Jon Matsuoka for a position on the Hawai Civil Rights Commission. With his broad and distinguished background in academia and philanthropy, Jon will bring a rich experience to the workings of the HCRC and will promote its mission to expand the civil rights of Hawaii's citizens. Having been both a faculty member and dean of the UH School of Social Work, Jon has been exposed to the many dimensions of race and gender discrimination that will serve him well on this position.

In addition, his work at the Consuelo Foundation drew him into circles of the community development world that gives him an intimate knowledge of the dynamics of Hawaii's Hawaiian community, which will enrich any of the deliberations in which he will be involved as a member of the HCRC.

Finally, as a person of integrity and sincerity, he will personally enrich the membership of the HCRC with the personal values he has developed over a lifetime of public service to his community.

I urge you, without qualification, to confirm him to this important position.

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

April 10, 2019 10:00 am  
State Capitol, Room 016



Submitted by Doris Ching, Educator  
Emeritus Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Hawai'i System  
Chief Academic Officer, Academy for Creative Media, University of Hawai'i System

***GM 651 – Consideration and confirmation to the Civil Rights Commission,  
Gubernatorial Nominee JON MATSUOKA, for a term to expire 06-30-2023***

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

I am pleased to support the consideration and confirmation of Jon Matsuoka to the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission. As a social worker, educator, and strong advocate of non-discrimination of all individuals, Dr. Matsuoka will be an asset to the Commission in assuring the protection and preservation of the civil rights of all individuals.

Thank you for the privilege opportunity to testify in support of GM 651 in support of the confirmation of Dr. Jon Matsuoka to the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission.