

Resolution 21-81 Testimony

MISC. COM. 238

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Thursday, April 8, 2021 11:59 AM
Subject: Public Safety Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Frederick E Saunders Jr
Phone 808-308-9942
Email fesaundersjr@gmail.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Public Safety
Agenda Item 21-81
Your position on the matter Support
Representing Self
Organization

Written Testimony

I am in full support of the nomination of Mr. Ben Mahi to the Honolulu Police Commission. Having worked with Mr. Mahi as an employees of the City and County of Honolulu, as well as a fellow student in our graduate studies, Ben is an avid team member and has been a well respected member of the Honolulu Police Department, serving the community and non profit organizations to improve the quality of life for all residents of the county. Ben is dedicated, positive and committed to the well being of his community and the City and County of Honolulu.

Testimony Attachment

Accept Terms and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Thursday, April 8, 2021 12:09 PM
Subject: Public Safety Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Harold Kahuakai Han Jr.
Phone 8087534385
Email hhan@hawaiianhumane.org
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Public Safety
Agenda Item 21-81
Your position on the matter Support
Representing Self
Organization

Aloha:

Written
Testimony

I would like to submit my testimony and support for Benjamin Mahi's nominations as Honolulu Police Commissioner. I have known Mr. Mahi for over 30 years both professionally and on a personal level. He understands our need for police accountability, honesty, and integrity; and has demonstrated that throughout his entire career. He thinks and acts strategically to address root causes of issues so that sustained improvement can be achieved. I saw this first hand when he consulted with the Hawaiian Humane Society, which impacted both people and animals.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Harold Han

Testimony
Attachment

Accept Terms
and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67

Testimony of
Jeremiah Pahukula, Jr.

Council Member Tommy Waters, Chair
City & County of Honolulu
City Council

Resolution 21-81 – Confirming the Appointment of Benjamin H. Mahi to serve
on the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu
April 14, 2021 (Wednesday)

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the Council:

I am pleased to submit written testimony in strong support of Benjamin H. Mahi (Ben) who has been nominated by Mayor Blangiardi to serve on the Honolulu Police Commission (“Commission”).

In July 2019 Ben joined First Hawaiian Bank’s (FHB) Security team. In that time, Ben and I worked closely to redesign our corporate facility’s physical security program. Besides years of law enforcement and private security experience, Ben brought with him strong commitment, discipline, and professionalism and has successfully developed these characteristics in the security staff he supervises.

Ben’s intimate working knowledge of the Honolulu Police Department gives him a great understanding of the issues that may come before the Commission. Ben understands and is committed to the Commission’s responsibilities. He will be an excellent asset to the Commission.

I humbly ask the City Council’s positive vote for Ben’s nomination

Jeremiah Pahukula, Jr.
(808) 844-3876
jpahukula@fhb.com 

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:38 AM
Subject: Council Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Jeffrey B Owens
Phone 18087225311
Email Jeff@JeffreyOwens.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Council
Agenda Item Resolution 21-81 Nomination to Police Commission
Your position on the matter Support
Representing Organization Self

Written Testimony

Aloha Council Members; I strongly support Ben Mahi for appointment to the Honolulu Police Commission. Ben is an experienced leader in both the government and private sectors. I know Ben to be a person of strong ethical character with the courage to speak-out in support of what is right and in opposition to what is not; yet he is open-minded, fair, and willing to give respectful consideration of the views of others. His military service and service in the Honolulu Police Department well equips him to understand the responsibilities of those who exercise authority, the importance of excellence in leadership, and the complexities of the Honolulu Police Department and its mission to serve the people of the City and County of Honolulu.
Mahalo,
Jeffrey B. Owens

Testimony Attachment
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IP: 192.168.200.67

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 3:49 PM
Subject: Council Testimony

Written Testimony

Name	John Bickel
Phone	8087289682
Email	jbickel@iolani.org
Meeting Date	04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee	Council
Agenda Item	Resolution 21-81
Your position on the matter	Oppose
Representing Organization	Organization Americans for Democratic Action
Written Testimony	We oppose this nomination as we think we should have someone who better represents the community.
Testimony Attachment	
Accept Terms and Agreement	1

IP: 192.168.200.67

MICHAEL J. GOLOJUCH, JR.

92-954 Makakilo Drive #71 ♦ Kapolei, HI 96707-1340

E-MAIL: mgolojuch@hotmail.com

April 11, 2021

City Council
City and County of Honolulu
530 S King St,
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Resolution 21-81 - appointment of Benjamin H. Mahi to serve on the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice-Chair Kia'āina and Council Members,

My name is Michael Golojuch, Jr. and I am 35+ year resident of Makakilo, a proud graduate of St. Louis High School, and longtime civil rights activist. I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity with the grave concerns I have regarding Mayor Rick Blangiardi's appointment of recently retired HPD Commander Benjamin H. Mahi to serve on the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu.

My grave concerns rise from the fact that Mr. Mahi has recently retired from the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) and that Mr. Mahi's "common law wife", it should be noted that there are no laws in the state of Hawai'i for such a union though Hawai'i will recognize common law marriages originating and recognized in another state or country, is currently serving as a lieutenant on the Honolulu Police force. These two (2) factors alone should exclude Mr. Mahi, any retired police officer and/or a family member of a current HPD officer from serving on the Police Commission.

This is due to the fact that one of the important duties the Police Commission has pursuant to the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu under the Powers and Duty portion, Section 6-1606 (d):

Receive, consider and investigate charges brought by the public against the conduct of the department or any of its members and submit a written report of its findings to the chief of police. If the chief of police disagrees with the findings of the police commission, the chief shall submit the reason in writing to the police commission. _A (sic) summary of the charges filed and their disposition shall be included in the annual report of the commission.

Councilmembers, as you consider Mr. Mahi's appointment to the Police Commission and he proceeds through the confirmation process I hope that you will consider asking him these following questions in an open forum:

- Why does Mr. Mahi not consider his current personal relationship and recent service on Honolulu's police force as a conflict of interest to serving on the Police Commission, especially given the scope of work required by City Charter?
- How many family members either by blood, marriage and/or hānai are currently serving on the Honolulu Police force? (I hope this question becomes standard for any appointee to the Police Commission.)

M. Golojuch, Jr. Testimony RE: Resolution 21-81 - appointment of Benjamin H. Mahi to serve on the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu

- How many times, if any, has Mr. Mahi had complaints filed against him in the performance of his police duties? What type of complaints were filed and what was the outcome?
- How many times, if any, has Mr. Mahi's family members (no names requested) had complaints filed against them in the performance of their police duties? What type of complaints were filed and what was the outcome, if known?
- How many close friends does Mr. Mahi have that are currently serving as a member of Honolulu's police force?
- Given there are no requirements in the City Charter will Mr. Mahi recuse himself if any complaints are filed against his family members, and/or close friends? Why or why not?
- What is Mr. Mahi's thoughts on the "blue wall of silence"? What did he do when he was an officer to breakdown that wall?
- If Mr. Mahi is confirmed how will he work to remove the public's perception of his bias given his background and personal relationships?
- What kind of reforms does Mr. Mahi believe that the Honolulu Police Department needs to help address justice system reform?
- If confirmed what does Mr. Mahi believe his role will be to address the erosion of trust the public has after the Kealoha conspiracy and abuse of power?
- What does Mr. Mahi believe that the Honolulu Police Department should be doing to build bridges and trust between communities that are over represented in Hawaii's prison system?
- Besides the investigations function what does Mr. Mahi think is the next important function of the Police Commission?
- If confirmed how will Mr. Mahi make himself available to the general public that may have concerns about the Police Commission, outside of the meetings of course?

While I am the one submitting these questions, I want you to know that these are the questions that my friends and acquaintances have brought up ever since Mr. Mahi's appointment was announced. I say this to let you know that I am not the only person that is looking for answers to these questions.

Should you or any member of your staff have questions or concerns regarding this testimony please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

In Solidarity,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.

Resolution: 21-81
Written Testimony for Benjamin (Ben) Mahi
To Public Safety Committee:

As the Director of Nursing at the Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific and I had the privilege of working with Benjamin (Ben) Mahi as the Manager of Security and Safety. Ben worked collaboratively with all departments to implement process improvements that ensured the highest safety for our staff and patients. The hospital has nursing care 24/7, therapy services Monday to Sunday, 3 units (floors), 82 beds and outpatient clinics Monday to Friday. Within a year Ben evaluated, implemented numerous safety improvements, initiated regular fire drills in compliance to regulations and developed a safety program that prepared the hospital for an outstanding Joint Commission accreditation in 2019. The Joint Commission surveyors were very impressed with the safety program that was very comprehensive and demonstrated quality improvements.

Ben performed a risk assessment of the hospital when he started. His experience, leadership, and knowledge of public safety helped to direct and coordinate activities when we had threatening activities on property such as a stabbing, car thefts, patient elopements, terroristic threats from visitors/patients, and TRO violations. He was able to calmly assess the situation, collaborate with the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), direct personal and mitigate further risk or harm. Ben made recommendations to the CEO and board of directors on how to improve security at the hospital such as name badge registration for hospital access, visitor registration and, installation of security doors. Ben was influential in organizing an Active shooter drill with HPD so all departments obtained training. He was instrumental in the hospital participation with the state emergency/disaster drills, writing policies/procedures, defining roles, and building protocols in the event of a disaster.

In conclusion, I recommend the appointment of Ben Mahi for Police Commissioner. He is a person of integrity, commitment, compassion, and dedication to the safety and welfare of all.

Sincerely,

Brenda Hiromoto, RN MSN
Queens Healthcare Centers- Practice Manager
808 227-9453

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 11:22 AM
Subject: Public Safety Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Cassandra Chee
Phone 425-381-3868
Email cchee@faithactionhawaii.org
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Public Safety
Agenda Item Resolution 21-81
Your position on the matter Oppose
Representing Organization Self

Written Testimony

My name is Cassie Chee and I am an organizer with Faith Action Hawaii living in Honolulu. I am very concerned about the nomination of Benjamin H. Mahi to the Honolulu Police Commission. It would not be appropriate or ethical for Mahi to be on this commission as a retired Police officer who has personal relationships with those he is supposed to hold accountable. I do not support this nomination and suggest that a trusted leader from the Micronesian community should fill this seat. The data is clear: Micronesian people are 30 times more likely to be arrested by the police. The person who joins the Police Commission must be from the communities who are currently most impacted by policing for us to move towards true accountability.

Testimony Attachment

Accept Terms and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67

Catherine Lee

(718) 736-5231 | cathie012@gmail.com

April 12, 2021

City Council
City and County of Honolulu
530 King St,
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Resolution 2181 – Appointment of Benjamin H. Mahi to Serve on the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice-Chair Kia-aina and Councilmembers,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Catherine Lee, and I am a resident of Honolulu. I am submitting this testimony in personal capacity to express my concerns about Mayor Blangiardi's recent nomination of former HPD Commander Benjamin Mahi to serve on the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu.

The obvious conflict of interest present in this nomination is the fact that Mr. Mahi is a former officer. However, it should also be noted that his longtime partner is *currently* serving as a lieutenant of the Department. In any organizational setting (whatever the industry -- be it within finance, non-profit, government, among others), oversight agencies take great care in ensuring any potential conflicts of interest are not present in the role of anyone serving on such boards. Mr. Mahi's former status and current relations should preclude him from even being considered to serve on the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu.

Perhaps more importantly, the Honolulu Police Commission has great potential power in bridging the gap between HPD and the community. As it currently stands, however, the majority of the Commission is currently made up of people with big business or police/prosecutor backgrounds. We do not need another person with a law enforcement background.

The Commission make-up can and should be better balanced. We need a commissioner who is representative of the people directly impacted by the criminal legal system. This will signal to the community that the City and County of Honolulu sees the community as equitable stakeholders and is committed to earning public confidence. Adding a retired HPD officer to this already imbalanced Commission sends the exact opposite message.

We urge the Council to consider who is not currently represented at the Police Commission. The Commission should not have restricted membership to inside members. We should have representation of the communities most affected by policing here in Hawai'i – who understands what it's like to be constantly policed in Hawai'i and is equipped to push for more transparency and accountability from HPD as a serving Commissioner. We need someone who acknowledges that Hawai'i is not in any way "different" from the mainland and does have racial disparities in

uses of force and arrests, as we have most recently seen in the death of Iremamber Sykap, a 16-year old child. Professional experience and lens of commission is lacking on-the-ground, real experience of being policed. The Commission's mission and purpose is at a crossroads due to the lack of representation and failure to truly represent communities that suffer the traumatic consequences of police misconduct and/or failures.

As you consider Mr. Mahi's appointment to the Police Commission and he proceeds through the confirmation process I hope that you will consider asking him these following questions in an open forum:

- Does Mr. Mahi not consider his current personal relationship and recent service on Honolulu's police force as a conflict of interest to serving on the Police Commission, especially given the scope of work required by City Charter?
- How many family members either by blood, marriage and/or hānai are currently serving on the Honolulu Police force? (I hope this question becomes standard for any appointee to the Police Commission – Commissioner Alivado is already serving currently and is the daughter of a former HPD officer)
- What do you think it's like to be policed?
- What do you think it's like to be harassed or targeted by police?
- Before becoming a police officer, were you ever the target of harassment/abuse from police?
- Where do you stand on HPD transparency and holding officers accountable for misconduct such as filing false police reports?
- Do you agree that the public has a right to know the names/identities of officers who've been suspended and/or discharged as a result of misconduct?
- Racial disparities?
- What is your relationship with SHOPO and union officials (potential conflicts of interest)?

The importance of a better balanced Police Commission needs to be reiterated, and we urge City Council to confirm the nomination of someone who:

- Demonstrates an interest in accountability and transparency from the Honolulu Police Department
- Is representative of the communities directly impacted by the criminal legal system and/or has worked directly with people impacted by police and policing and,
- Acknowledges that there are racial and wealth disparities in Honolulu's policing.

I hope you consider these questions and viewpoints as City Council moves through the nomination process. I'd like to further stress that while I submit this as a personal testimony, these are the general themes discussed with many community members and organizations.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding my testimony, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration,

Catherine Lee

FULL COUNCIL
Honolulu City Council
April 14, 2021 10:00 AM

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO RESOLUTION 21-81 CONFIRMING THE
APPOINTMENT OF BENJAMIN H. MAHI TO SERVE ON THE POLICE
COMMISSION OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU.**

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia‘aina, Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Jun Shin, and I am a member of the Hawai‘i Workers Center Sponsoring Committee. I am testifying today in my individual capacity as a resident of Council District 5, in **OPPOSITION to Resolution 21-81**, which would confirm Mr. Benjamin H. Mahi to serve on the Honolulu Police Commission for a term that is set to expire on December 31, 2025.

Mayor Blangiardi and the City Council should seriously consider who is impacted by the commission’s work and is currently being left out of the room when it comes to picking a nominee to serve as a police watchdog. Who has political power and who doesn’t? Respectfully, the police have plenty of power already while our brothers, sisters, and friends like 16 year old Iremamber Sykap do not. As a commissioner (and potential swing vote), will the nominee be able to put aside his experiences and his relationships, both current and former within HPD to meaningfully redress abuse done by the department towards members of the community? Will the nominee be able to see a world beyond policing, starting from not responding to the housing crisis, as well as mental health issues with boots on the ground? I think that will be very difficult, if not impossible to do.

Please go back to the drawing board and find a candidate that is from a community impacted by the police. This includes our working class and lower-income communities, which are not limited to members of the LGBTQIA+ community, formerly incarcerated folks, COFA communities, etc. At the very least, their advocates, including public defenders, mental health professionals or social workers would also be crucial representatives of the people in this space.

Please **hold** this nomination.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,
1561 Kanunu Street
Honolulu, HI 96814
Cell: 808-255-6663
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 7:17 AM
Subject: Council Testimony

Written Testimony

Name David Gierlach
Phone 8086738930
Email david.gierlach@gmail.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Council
Agenda Item res 21-81
Your position on the matter Oppose
Representing Organization Self

Written Testimony

I respectfully oppose the appointment of Mr Mahi to the police commission. At a time when our police department is clearing only 5% of it's cases, in light of years of corruption by chief Kealoha and, as the current commission recently concluded, incompetent management by the current chief, now is the time for strong independent voices on the commission, not an "insider" whose spouse is employed by the very department he's to oversee. Further, the very troubling recent shooting of a Chuukese minor indicates that all is NOT well with our police force. As one who represented SHOPO for many years, I have great aloha for our police. And sometimes, the greatest gift we can give these brave men and women is the gift of truly independent oversight so that too many years of "business as usual" can be cleared away and fresh ideas can be planted. Thank you kindly for allowing me to testify.

Testimony Attachment
Accept Terms and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 10:09 PM
Subject: Public Safety Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Myrna S Ariola
Phone 8082551970
Email mariol710@aol.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Public Safety
Agenda Item 21-81
Your position on the matter Comment
Representing Organization Self

Written Testimony

My name is Myrna Ariola. I have known Ben Mahi since he was 13 years old. He lived with my family until he joined the Army at age 19. No one could be prouder of Ben. He is honest and hard working. I have taught him to be fair as well as understanding. Ben has the integrity and intelligence to complete any task. Ben is a team player that will be an asset to any organization. Thank you Myrna Ariola

Testimony Attachment

Accept Terms and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 6:41 PM
Subject: Public Safety Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Caroline Kunitake
Phone 808 782 2150
Email caroline.m.kunitake@gmail.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Public Safety
Agenda Item Resolution 21-81
Your position on the matter Oppose
Representing Self
Organization

Dear City Council,
Please oppose the appointment of Mr. Benjamin Mahi to the Honolulu Police Commission. Mr. Benjamin Mahi has a conflict of interest because his partner is still an active duty police officer with the Honolulu Police Department.

Because the Honolulu Police Commission is constantly under great public scrutiny, it is in the best interest of the Honolulu Police Commission to have commissioners that do not have such conflicts of interest.

Written Testimony It has been an extremely challenging year for all police departments across the nation due to COVID-19, gun violence, racism and police brutality.

We need committed volunteers on the Honolulu Police Commission that can make the best, unbiased decisions for the overall safety and well-being of our Honolulu Police Department.

Thank you for reviewing this issue. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to oppose this nomination.

Mahalo,
Caroline Kunitake

Testimony Attachment

Accept Terms and Agreement 1

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:04 AM
Subject: Public Safety Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Kristen Young
Phone 808-927-0741
Email kristenslyoung@gmail.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Public Safety
Agenda Item Resolution 21-81
Your position on the matter Oppose
Representing Self
Organization

Aloha, Council members ~

I am a Honolulu resident who loves my community and I am concerned about the confirmation of the appointment of Benjamin H. Mahi to serve on the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu (Resolution 21-81).

In a time when there is valid mistrust in police/police departments across the nation for misuse of power by law enforcement and, worse, poor accountability for these actions, the appointment of Mr. Mahi, a retired HPD commander married to a longtime partner who currently works as a lieutenant with HPD, by Mayor Blangiardi, who is backed by the police union, brings a great amount of concern to myself and many others. Clearly there are conflicts of interest. But this also shows me that Mayor Blangiardi is not interested in even showing support for or understanding of the movements for justice which have gained new momentum in the past months and weeks following many incidents of police killing and harming citizens (which go back centuries) even here in Hawai'i.

Written
Testimony

From the little information I have, I gather that Benjamin H. Mahi is a fine person with experience in law enforcement, which seems valuable for a position on the Police Commission, but I fear this former experience will encourage 'normalcy' and doing things the way they've always been done in the Honolulu Police Department when many people, myself included, would say we are past the point of reform and desperately need to reimagine community safety and criminal justice.

I am interested to know why Mr. Mahi retired from HPD, as it's not entirely impossible that he recognized corruption and injustice by the department, no longer wanted to serve, and was able to walk away. This situation might be different as his experience paired with criticism of the department could lead to needed change.

But overall, I believe Mr. Mahi's former and current connections to HPD could get in the way of objective oversight of the department. I think it is in our nature to be loyal to those we know and have relationships with, so even with good intentions to side with those who've experienced injustice by the state and our systems, Mr. Mahi may be unable to do so, and it is unfair of us to put him in that position.

In an article by Civil Beat, Mr. Mahi is quoted saying that he looks "forward to the open and fair vetting process," in response to his nomination by Mayor Blangiardi. I, too, look forward to the open and fair vetting process of the person who fills the vacant seat on the Police Commission. I respectfully request that you oppose the confirmation of Benjamin H. Mahi to the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,
Kristen Young

Testimony
Attachment

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and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:02 AM
Subject: Council Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Karen Taroc
Phone 18083860446
Email karen_taroc@rocketmail.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2020
Council/PH Committee Council
Agenda Item Reso 21-81
Your position on the matter Comment
Representing Organization Self

I am testifying on behalf of my brother Ret. Capt. Benjamin Mahi for the position of Police Commissioner.

He is experienced in criminal justice, also civil rights and women's equality. He has a PhD in Criminal Justice.

Written

Testimony

He brings a strong figure to better respond to complaints of civil rights abuses and violence against women. Capt. Mahi understands what is needed to bring about a more accountable, open, and transparent police commission. He can also keep officers in check. The public should be informed of the facts. More importantly, he is willing to serve and is very qualified to do so..

Testimony Attachment

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IP: 192.168.200.67

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:05 AM
Subject: Council Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Briana Kawata
Phone 8082713996
Email itsmebri@me.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Council
Agenda Item Resolution 2181
Your position on the matter Oppose
Representing Organization Self

The obvious conflict of interest present in this nomination is the fact that Mr. Mahi is a former officer. However, it should also be noted that his longtime partner is currently serving as a lieutenant of the Department. In any organizational setting (whatever the industry -- be it within finance, non-profit, government, among others), oversight agencies take great care in ensuring any potential conflicts of interest are not present in the role of anyone serving on such boards. Mr. Mahi's former status and current relations should preclude him from even being considered to serve on the Police Commission of the City and County of Honolulu.

Written
Testimony

Perhaps more importantly, the Honolulu Police Commission has great potential power in bridging the gap between HPD and the community. As it currently stands, however, the majority of the Commission is currently made up of people with big business or police/prosecutor backgrounds. We do not need another person with a law enforcement background.

The Commission make-up can and should be better balanced. We need a commissioner who is representative of the people directly impacted by the criminal legal system. This will signal to the community that the City and County of Honolulu sees the community as equitable stakeholders and is committed to earning public confidence. Adding a retired HPD officer to this already imbalanced Commission sends the exact opposite message.

Testimony
Attachment

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:35 AM
Subject: Council Testimony

Written Testimony

Name BIANCA ISAKI
Phone 8089275606
Email BIANCA@KAHEA.ORG
Meeting Date 10-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Council
Agenda Item Reso 21-81
Your position on the matter Oppose
Representing Organization Self

Written Testimony

Aloha Councilmembers,
I oppose approval of resolution 21-81. Mayor Blangiardi nominated a retired Honolulu police officer to the commission and his long-time spouse is a current HPD lieutenant. The Police Commission:
- appoints and may remove the Chief of Police;
- reviews rules and regulations for the administration of the Honolulu Police Department;
- reviews the annual budget prepared by the Chief of Police and may make recommendations thereon to the Mayor;
- receives, considers, and investigates charges brought by the public against the conduct of the department or any of its members and submits a written report of its findings to the Chief of Police.

I'm opposing the nomination just on the obvious conflict grounds. I don't understand why it's not obvious to the mayor.

Yours,
Bianca Isaki, Ph.D., Esq.

Testimony Attachment
Accept Terms and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:43 PM
Subject: Public Safety Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Chance C. Relacion
Phone (808)256-4576
Email noakup808@gmail.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Public Safety
Agenda Item Resolution number 21-81
Your position on the matter Support
Representing Organization Self
Security
To whom it may concern;

Written
Testimony

I am writing this letter to recommend Benjamin H. Mahi for the position of Police Commissioner with the City & County of Honolulu. I have known Mr. Mahi for the past 18 months and have worked closely with him as an Assistant Security Supervisor here at First Hawaiian Bank. While under his direction Mr. Mahi has always exhibited the highest level of integrity and while it's not always easy, it is always the right thing to do. In his short time with First Hawaiian Bank he has identified areas of opportunity for improvement and immediately implemented policies and procedures to tighten up our teams operations ensuring the safety of our employees and our clients. In addition, Mr. Mahi has provided the guidance and training necessary for me and others on our team to take on a role with greater responsibility should the time arise. He is consistently teaching and training in an effort to make us better and as a result we are able to operate with great efficiency. I believe Mr. Mahi embodies the character and values needed to be the next Police Commissioner of Honolulu.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at crelacion@fhb.com or (808)256-4576 should you wish to discuss further.

Mahalo,
Chance

Testimony
Attachment

Accept Terms
and Agreement

1

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 4:09 PM
Subject: Council Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Jessica Hernandez
Phone (716)481-3239
Email jessica.04.hernandez@gmail.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Council
Agenda Item Resolution 2181
Your position on the matter Oppose
Representing Organization Self

Aloha Councilmembers,

My name is Jessica Hernandez, and I am a District 5 Honolulu resident writing to you today to express my concerns about the nomination of former Honolulu Police Department (HPD) Commander Benjamin Mahi to the Honolulu Police Commission (HPC).

Written
Testimony

I'd like to first address the issue of conflict of interest. Mr. Mahi has been retired for about 5 years. Police officers speak proudly of the bonds of brotherhood that form amongst them and connect each other across all police departments. This means that Mr. Mahi still has plenty of personal and professional connections to HPD. Regardless of how strong the connections are, as a Honolulu Police Commissioner, there would be absolutely no way of knowing without a doubt whether or not Mr. Mahi is violating a conflict of interest during misconduct investigations. Mr. Mahi's spouse of 20 years adds even more uncertainty to his ability to remain conflict-free as she is still an active HPD lieutenant.

Conflict of interest concerns have been a significant and pricey issue for HPD. The ACLU recently won a lawsuit that was borne out of a conflict of interest, and the city will be paying for the Kealohas' corruption for years to come. The Kealohas were a married couple whose positions of power permitted them to abuse that power to enrich themselves; to falsely arrest and charge others in order to protect themselves; and to use the HPC to shield themselves from further scrutiny as well as obtain legal support paid for by taxpayers. If confirmed, Mr. Mahi will sit on that same commission that failed in their

duties to put the community's best interests over the police department's.

More importantly, in my view, is how the actual make-up of the commission would be even more biased in favor of HPD if Mr. Mahi were to be confirmed as a Commissioner. I have watched each HPC meeting since November 2020, and I have been severely disappointed in the lack of transparency from HPD, the failure of Commissioners to ask targeted questions that get real answers from HPD, and the lack of representation of the communities most impacted by police and policing. This is a significant issue when it comes to scrutinizing and really understanding the impact of HPD's actions on the public. The Honolulu Police Commission has a mission as well as the ability to bridge the gap between HPD and the community, but their current constitution prevents them from succeeding at that goal. Placing Mr. Mahi on the Commission would further debilitate the Commission's ability to, as their mission states, build "mutual respect between police officers and the public".

Councilmembers, as you consider Mr. Mahi's appointment to the Honolulu Police Commission and he proceeds through the confirmation process, I hope that you will consider asking him these questions in an open forum:

- What are Mr. Mahi's initial thoughts and impressions of the killing of Iremamber Sykap?
- Does Mr. Mahi believe that HPD needs to be more transparent and accountable to the public? If he does, what would he do as Commissioner to pursue that goal? And what, in his opinion, could HPD do to be more transparent and accountable?
- Does Mr. Mahi consider his current personal relationship and recent service in HPD a conflict of interest? If not, why? And if he does recognize the conflict of interest, what are the (detailed) steps he will take to ensure the conflicts of interest will not impact his ability to fulfill his responsibilities as a Commissioner pursuant to the City Charter?
- What is Mr. Mahi's relationship or connection with SHOPO union officers and stewards?
- How many times, if any, has Mr. Mahi had complaints--substantiated and unsubstantiated--filed against him in the performance of his police duties? What type of complaints were filed and what was the outcome?
- How many times, if any, has Mr. Mahi's family members, friends, and/or spouse had complaints filed against them in the performance of their police duties? What type of complaints were filed and what was the outcome, if known?
- What is Mr. Mahi's thoughts on the "blue wall of silence"? What did he do when he was an officer to break down that wall?
- If confirmed, what steps will Mr. Mahi take to build bridges with community members and groups that are disproportionately arrested, harassed and incarcerated by police?

Please note, that my questions and concerns do not even begin to address the concerns that other groups have as it relates to police and public safety. There are significant concerns held by people who are LGBTQ+, survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, houseless folks, etc. who are not even close to being represented on the Commission that deserve to have a seat at the table. There are so many people who do not feel safe around police and do not feel safe calling police, and they are the ones who need to be represented on the Commission if we are serious about the Commission's role as a bridge between the public and HPD.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this matter. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding my testimony, please feel free to contact me.

Jessica Hernandez

Testimony
Attachment
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IP: 192.168.200.67

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 4:53 PM
Subject: Public Safety Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Terrence Yim
Phone 8082263109
Email tntyim@gmail.com
Meeting Date 04-14-2021
Council/PH Committee Public Safety
Agenda Item Resolution 21-81
Your position on the matter Oppose
Representing Self
Organization
Written Testimony
Testimony Attachment
Accept Terms and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67