

RES23-048
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 228

PUBLIC SAFETY (PS)

PUBLIC SAFETY (PS) Meeting

Meeting Date: May 4, 2023 @ 01:00 PM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Janeen Olds	Email: janeenoldslaw@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 3, 2023 @ 01:43 PM



JANEEN-ANN A. OLDS
ATTORNEY AT LAW LLC

May 3, 2023

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair and Presiding Officer and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Testimony in Support – Resolution 23-48 Confirming the Appointment of
Debbi Eleneki to Serve on the Fire Commission of the City and County of
Honolulu

Aloha kākou:

It is with great pleasure, and without hesitation, that I support the appointment of Debbi Eleneki to the Honolulu Fire Commission. I have known Debbi personally for over forty years and more recently had the opportunity to work with her on a professional level.

After thirty years in a corporate legal practice, I have witnessed the intimate details of many businesses and to some extent, governmental agencies. Regardless of the industry, nothing, even technology, replaces the presence and passion of a strong leader in a successful, sustainable organization. Debbi has been such a leader within the Fire Department (during her thirty plus years of service) as well as within our lāhui. She has always led with a resilient work ethic, a high standard of excellence and a strong sense of purpose.

Her resilient work ethic was ingrained from her youngest years as her parents worked hard to not only establish their own careers but also to provide stability for a family of seven children. Working hard and striving for excellence were not an aspiration but an expectation in her household. As the youngest, Debbi not only learned from her parents and older siblings, but has always sought to educate herself and/or sought assistance. Her humility and willingness to learn and seek information is the foundation to organizational excellence in both leadership and management. I have no doubt that Debbi will always do her due diligence, ask the right questions in a respectful manner and make decisions with careful consideration and integrity.

In speaking with others who have known Debbi, supporting and nurturing the success of her fellow first responders was and remains a priority for Debbi. Though she had a strong family to support her ambitions, she appreciates that not all are so fortunate. She has embraced her kuleana to not only nurture and mentor the “employee” but the whole person. She has mentored top performers and community service volunteers while delivering excellent customer service in our community. No doubt she will do the same as a member of the Fire Commission.

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Debbi is not one to sit on the sidelines when she has the capability to help and effectuate positive change. Even though she was enjoying retirement from the Honolulu Fire Department, including an almost stint on Wheel of Fortune, she answered the call when the City and County of Honolulu management asked her to rejoin the public service ranks to assist with the All Hazards Incident Management Team's (AHIMT) response to COVID and Hurricane Douglas. She has also generously given her time to building infrastructure and mentoring Native Hawaiian and Indigenous female entrepreneurs as part of Kūkolu.

As our upstart nonprofit has grown, Debbi is always looking at meaningful and innovative process improvement within our logistics and operations. Under her guidance, we have better record management and accessibility, work efficiencies, and data analysis and reporting. She has shown that by taking a proactive approach to organizational challenges, an organization can backstop against potential difficulties and pursue areas of advancement and growth. Many of the qualities which allowed Debbi to rise within the Fire Department will serve her well as a commissioner.

As much as I have enjoyed knowing Debbi as a seasoned professional and leader, I have enjoyed most seeing her thrive as a mother of four, a sister to six and a friend to many. She keeps herself well-grounded and balanced, and has prioritized the value of spending time with her kids, even as they embark on their own professional careers. Debbi, like many working moms has come to fully utilize the 24 hours in a day that God has given us, and knowing Debbi bartered for more at times (and probably won). She will now barter for time in continued service to our first responder community.

Finally, Debbi has been the recipient of numerous accolades and awards, including being the first "female" firefighter, captain and battalion chief. However, though we are all proud that young girls and women, particularly those of Native Hawaiian descent, can now see themselves in such leadership positions, there is no doubt that Debbi was the best "person" for those positions and now as a commissioner on the Fire Commission.

Mahalo nui loa for allowing me to express my unconditional support of the appointment of Debbi Eleneki to the Honolulu Fire Commission and the opportunity to submit this written testimony. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Me ke aloha pumehana,



Janeen-Aryn A. Olds