RES25-011
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 198

PUBLIC SAFETY & CUSTOMER SERVICES (PS)

PUBLIC SAFETY & CUSTOMER SERVICES (PS) Meeting

Meeting Date: Apr 3, 2025 @ 01:00 PM

Support: 47

Oppose: 19

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Scott Jonis	CAltima@goggle.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Mar 29, 2025 @ 06:39 AM

Testimony:

I oppose Dr Ireland's nomination. He has already had over 6 six a Director of HESD and there are still the same concerns. It came as no surprise to me when I heard Ocean Safety wanted to be a Department of their own, this was a clear indication of the lack of quality leadership and management of Director Ireland and Santee. Moral is the lowest it has ever been due to friends getting promoted as payback. There are several investigations that have not closed since some involve his circle of trust employees. The EMS Chief position has not been filled for over 4 years. Dr Ireland holds both EMS Chief and Director positions. It is time for a change of leadership to move EMS into the next generation of providing the best service to residents and visitors to Oahu with a plan to merge with Honolulu Fire. Most all EMS public services in the US are Fire based EMS. The only 2 major EMS services that are not is Honolulu and Boston, both face similar issues. Both have personnel shortages, unit closures, funding and moral issues. The next Director needs to embrace moving to Fire based EMS with a solid strategic action plan for 5 and 10 years and beyond, currently HNLEMS has no written plan so they are rudderless for the future. Please do not vote for another 4 more years of rudderless management

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kevin Nakano	pokiip@yahoo.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 29, 2025 @ 12:18 PM

Testimony:

Honorable City Council Members,

(RES25-011)

My name is Kevin NAKANO and I am writing in support of James H. E. IRELAND, M.D., to serve as the Director of Emergency Services of the City and County of Honolulu.

I have known Dr. IRELAND since December 2017 when he was an HPD Police Recruit where I was his Class Sergeant. I thought to

myself, "Why would a Doctor want to become a Police Officer?!" He was treated the same as all the Recruits and he surprised me

and my staff with his resilience, perseverance, dedication, and heart. It did not take long for me to see that he had a willingness to help others, not only in terms of medical assistance. I truly feel that if he had continued, he would be a Police Officer this day. Due to the fact that his patients still wanted his care, he could not turn down their request for medical attention and he gracefully bowed out from furthering his dream of becoming a Honolulu Police Officer. He was deeply missed by his fellow Recruits for his guidance and positive attitude.

Since becoming the Director of Emergency Services, I have had the privilege of seeing that same spirit and drive to make a positive difference in society that he exhibited as a Police Recruit. I am currently a Lieutenant in the HPD's Communication Division and I often hear him on the radio responding to cases at all hours of the day to assist with calls for C & C ambulance service. My daughter was a student in the Kapiolani Community College EMT Program and became a proud graduate, eventually landing a spot in the CORE Program. She often told me how he would attend their classes to check on how their class was doing and not make them feel intimidated by his position. Instead, he would inspire them with enthusiasm and support, telling them that the career path they chose would make a difference in peoples lives and how it was an honorable career.

In closing, Dr. IRELAND is a person who I feel has the foresight, passion and compassion to lead the Emergency Services for the City and County of Honolulu by providing its employees with the necessary tools, resources, and leadership to serve the people of Hawaii with the spirit of Aloha.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Janice Lee	porsha1234$@gmail.com	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Mar 29, 2025 @ 12:34 PM

Testimony:
I am strongly opposed to the nomination of Dr Jim Ireland as Director of HESD. He has had 2 terms and has not been able to solve the issues like unit closures, poor morale, low pay and high call volume. He also has not begun the city audit recommendation of merging with Honolulu Fire that was delivered in 2021 while he was the Director of HESD. It is time for a change, a leader with fresh eyes, fresh mind and progressive thinking to move EMS forward

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Robin Chun-Carmichael	rchun3356@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 30, 2025 @ 09:59 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Rick Bruno	grbruno510@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 30, 2025 @ 04:19 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jennifer Diesman	jenn_diesman@hmsa.com	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA)	Support	Mar 30, 2025 @ 10:07 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Christina Hafoka	cmapuahfoka@gmail.com	96762

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 31, 2025 @ 07:46 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Matt Wells	ercenw@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 31, 2025 @ 09:12 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Pamela Foster	PFosterRN@me.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 31, 2025 @ 12:10 PM

Testimony:

Thank you for this opportunity to support Dr. James Ireland for the position of Director for City and County Honolulu Emergency Services. I have worked along side Dr. Ireland for over 20 years through the airport program, community training, and local events. He has the passion and expertise to manage this position. I support Dr. Ireland and nominate him for this position.

Thank you

Pamela Foster, RN

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Stephaie Chun	sc.808@myyahoo.com	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 31, 2025 @ 01:26 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
John Thielst	thielst@coffman.com	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 31, 2025 @ 02:06 PM

Testimony:

I support Dr. Ireland,

He has done a fantastic job and my hope he is allowed to continue his work. Especially for the North Shore First Responders facility.

Thank you,

John Thielst

38-year resident of the North Shore Sharks Cove area

808 479 4481

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Denise Antolini	antolinid@gmail.com	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 31, 2025 @ 02:11 PM

Testimony:

Aloha PS/CS Committee Chair Okimoto,

I write in STRONG SUPPORT of the re-confirmation of Dr. James Ireland as the EMS Director.

I know from direct experience with Dr. Ireland at a series of public meetings as well as my site visits with him to EMS facilities and other communications that he is fully aligned with our community vision for North Shore First Responder Center.

In fact, I give Dr. Ireland and former Ocean Safety Chief Titchen, the credit for bringing this co-located facility proposal to our community, *almost two years ago*, in March 2023 where they made the case to the Sunset Beach Community Association that we need to fill the huge gap in our ocean safety and ambulance services in our large rural region.

Dr. Ireland has been appropriately analytical, professional, and visionary in all of my dealings with him in the past two years - particularly about the location, planning, and design issues - and he has been very respectful of the role of the Council, the Mayor, and his Cabinet colleagues and staff, in this whole process.

He has been an invaluable proactive leader on this project. He has been very communicative with our community, making the long drive out for numerous special meetings in the evenings, and making the extra effort to include his North Shore and Waipi'o station staff in those meetings and discussions. We appreciate him!

I am in FULL SUPPORT and firmly hope you will pass along his nomination to full Council for confirmation.

Mahalo nui,

Denise Antolini

Pūpūkea resident, District 2

Name:	Email:	Zip:
gary a yabuta	gyabuta@hi-hidta.org	96793
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area	Support	Mar 31, 2025 @ 03:15 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Kimi Prentice	kokokalena@gmail.com	96786
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 31, 2025 @ 03:47 PM
Name: Tim Sakahara	Email: tsakahara@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 31, 2025 @ 04:29 PM
Name: Robert Lee	Email: robertlee@hawaiifirefighters.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Hawaii Fire Fighters Association (HFFA)	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 31, 2025 @ 04:37 PM
Name: Bill Quinlan	Email: nimboy44@aol.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 31, 2025 @ 07:55 PM

Testimony:

I strongly support Dr James Ireland for EMS Director

Dr Ireland has excellent knowledge of the needs for the North Shore and has gone out of his way to meet and communicate with us,

EMS is EXTREMELY important to the North Shore as we are very distant from Hospital Emergency rooms.

Just this afternoon EMS came to our street to take care of a resident who had badly cut his arm with a saw.

The new EMS location planned for Sharks Cove is critical to North Shore residents and Dr Ireland supports adding EMS there.

Name: Brandon Rabang	Email: brabang@gmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 31, 2025 @ 08:12 PM

Testimony:

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: RES25-011

It is with great pride and confidence that I write this letter of recommendation for Dr. James Ireland to serve as the Chief of EMS for the State of Hawaii.

I have had the privilege of knowing Dr. Ireland for over 20 years, during which time he has consistently demonstrated exceptional clinical skill, professionalism, and unwavering compassion for his patients and community. He is an

outstanding physician and a truly caring individual, with a deep understanding of emergency medical systems and a commitment to public service that is second to none.

Dr. Ireland brings not only experience and expertise, but also the kind of leadership and integrity that inspires trust and confidence. I can think of no one better suited to lead Hawaii's EMS system into the future.

Sincerely,

Brandon Rabang

brabang@gmail.com

Cell: 808-368-4765

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Roberts Leinau	leinaur001@hawaii.rr.com	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Mar 31, 2025 @ 09:14 PM

Testimony:

I have been following JAMES H. E. IRELAND, M.D., efforts to support important issues on Oahu's North Shore. I feel that he is a reliable professional who will make us all proud. Please support his appointment.

Mahalo

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Pliny Arenas	pliny.arenas@usrenalcare.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
U.S. Renal Care	Support	Mar 31, 2025 @ 10:29 PM

Testimony:

Dr. Ireland has gone above and beyond as the Director of Emergency Services of the city and county of Honolulu. Notably, he spearheaded the services provided to homeless people. He is always advocating for the safety of the residents. He is a pillar in the End Stage Renal Disease as well. Mahalo for appointing again as our director.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Samantha Mislinski	samanthamislinski@gmail.com	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 08:57 AM

Testimony:

Aloha PS/CS Committee Chair Okimoto,

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of the re-confirmation of Dr. James Ireland as the EMS Director.

I know Dr. Ireland has long supported filling the much-needed gap in the North Shore's First Responder capacity. Our rural community sees massive influxes of visitors daily, and our capacity to support these numbers is lacking. Dr. Ireland

has supported the expansion of these services. Dr. Ireland has demonstrated he understands the needs and wishes of our community and has shown open support over the past few years.

I hope the Council heeds my strong support and re-confirms Dr. James Ireland as the EMS Director.

Mahalo nui,

Samantha Cole Mislinski

North Shore resident, District 2

Name:	Email:	Zip:
J Urago	jurago123@msn.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 1, 2025 @ 09:02 AM

Testimony:

I oppose this nomination he is not fit to be the future or face of EMS. Being a doctor does not mean he is a good EMS Chief. Why is he always driving lights and siren at high speeds to calls. Does he even write any reports? How can he work at Straub, own clinics and work at Waianae comp and still manage EMS which is a 24/7/365 job. Something does not add up.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sweetie Nelson	sweetie.nelson@koolina.com	96707
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Ko Olina Resort Operators Association, Inc.	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 10:52 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ryan Yamane	ktakushi@dhs.hawaii.gov	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Department of Human Services	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 11:10 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jeffrey Stone	info@theresortgroup.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 12:10 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jennifer Narito	jennifernarito@gmail.com	96701
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 12:18 PM

Testimony:

I fully support the reappointment of James Ireland to serve as the Director of Emergency Services of the City and County of Honolulu. His leadership and dedication to the community have been exceptional, and I believe he is the best candidate for this critical role.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Narito

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Scott Miscovich	scott.miscovich@pmgusa.org	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 12:37 PM

Testimony:

I strongly support Jim Ireland MD to continue in his current role @ EMS.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Burkley and Chynna Showe	info@theresortgroup.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 12:43 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Briana Mullen	brmullen@queens.org	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 01:09 PM

Testimony:

My name is Briana Mullen and I am an APRN currently working for Dr. James Ireland in West Oahu. I am writing this testimony in support of Dr. James Ireland for reappointment. I have known Dr. Ireland for nearly 20 yrs. In my experience he has always shown generousity, and compassion towards his patients and the West Oahu community. He has maintaned respect, professionalism and fairness in a work setting. I have witnessed him in stressful situations and have always noticed his ability to keep his composure, speak calmly, and continue to work with a high level of efficiency. His composure and foresight positively affects the people and staff around him, making it easier to focus on the goals at hand. I feel that this, along with his knowledge and experience, makes him an irreplaceable asset for the City and County of Honolulu EMS Directorship.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Shayne Enright	paiko76@hawaii.rr.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 06:06 PM

Testimony:

I support the reconfirmation of Dr. Jim Ireland as the Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. Over the

past four years, Director Ireland has led our city's Emergency Medical Services through unprecedented challenges, navigating a global pandemic while simultaneously managing two critical departments. It was a time of survival, not thriving, and yet he kept vital services functioning under immense pressure.

Today, Director Ireland stands ready to drive meaningful progress on multiple fronts. He has laid a strong foundation, and disrupting this momentum by bringing in new leadership would be a disservice to the department and the community. The notion that he has not taken positive steps to improve EMS is simply untrue. In fact, the new uniforms are just one visible sign of a broader effort to uplift morale and professional pride, signaling the start of many positive changes ahead.

Director Ireland has shown a deep commitment to modernizing EMS operations.

His leadership during the pandemic was a testament to his dedication, but it was also a period of crisis management—focused on survival rather than long-term growth. Now, with stability returning, Director Ireland is uniquely positioned to lead EMS into a new era of excellence. He deserves the opportunity to see these plans through and silence any misconceptions about his commitment to bettering EMS.

Continuity in leadership is essential for sustained progress. For the sake of our Emergency Medical Services, Dr. Jim Ireland must be given the chance to fulfill his vision and continue the critical work he has started.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sam Moku	sammoku@yahoo.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 07:22 PM

Testimony:

Aloha e Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Kia'aina Vice Chair and Members of the Public and Safety Committee:

I am in full support for the confirmation of James Ireland as Director of Emergency Services. I have known Jim for over 15 years and I've worked with him in previous city administrations. I am confident that Dr. Ireland will do everything he can to find resources and be a better leader for the Department of Emergency Services.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sara Nohealani	sni812@hawaii.edu	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 08:32 PM

Testimony:

I am in support of affirming James Ireland for director of EMS because of his dedication and passion for emergency medical services. He will continue to move EMS in a positive direction, which will benefit the residents and visitors of the city and county of Honolulu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sunny Johnson	sjf@hawaii.edu	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 1, 2025 @ 09:29 PM

Testimony:

My name is Sunny Johnson, and I am Paramedic Supervisor for the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. I am writing in support of Dr. Jim Ireland's reconfirmation as the Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department.

I have had the privilege of working for Honolulu EMS for 11 years. I started as an EMT in 2014 and worked until I became a Paramedic in 2019. Director Ireland started his term in undoubtedly the most challenging time in healthcare, during a global pandemic. He showed compassion, strength and leadership in a time when we needed it the most.

The years following the pandemic were about rebuilding and growth, which Director Ireland whole heartedly embraced. He was able to provide the field personnel with advanced life-saving equipment, such as a digital intubation tool and an automated CPR device. He has also worked to solve issues within Honolulu EMS, particularly staffing shortages and an increasing 9-1-1 call volume, which are not problems that are unique to Honolulu. EMS agencies across the nation are facing these very same challenges.

Being a first responder is a challenging job, both physically and emotionally. The people that stay in EMS truly love their job and the community they serve. We deserve a director that reflects that, and I believe that is Dr. Ireland.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
E hoopakele ia makou	helpcityems@gmail.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 12:07 AM

Testimony:

Opposition to the reappointment of Dr Ireland

Dear council members,

I am submitting testimony in opposition of the reappointment of Dr Ireland.

I know that Dr Ireland is probably asking you for your support as are his supporters but I think it's very important to take into consideration our complaints and observations regarding Dr Irelands performance over the past 4 years. Dr Ireland has made many promises about our department but no promises were fulfilled that benefited our department as a whole.

Dr Ireland and his supporters have attempted to discredit the 4 that openly testified against him calling them terminated,

disgruntled employees and irrelevant and questioned their motives for publicly testifying in opposition but I think it's important to point out that the reason why they publicly testified was because they had nothing to lose. They simply were able to publicly express their concerns of an administration that they feel is toxic, retaliatory and extremely micromanaged. Both Dr Ireland and Ian Santee have been leading a department with their egos, using favoritism and an inconsistent disciplinary approach leading to a fear of being retaliated against. This is why I'm anonymously writing to you. Let me provide an example. Yes Laurie and John were terminated. But the process that was used to discipline them was not consistent with what should have been done. And to find the violations so severe that they were terminated ? This same scenario has happened once prior to one of our colleagues during irelands prior tenure under the Caldwell administration. That individual was reinstated years later as is what will probably happen to both Laurie and John wasting a ton money on the investigation and back pay. On the other hand, an employee of ours was placed on leave and pulled off of the road for literally placing a patient alive into a body bag, zipping it up and transporting the patient to the ER only to find that when they opened the body bag at the ER the pt was in cardiac arrest. For those of you that don't know what a body bag is, it is a non permeable bag that is essentially both water and air tight. This employee failed to use good judgment and basic assessment skills. This was negligent and should have resulted in termination. Instead this employee is still working with us. Jon and Laurie are vocal and would constantly express their concerns about the administration, on the other hand, the other employee is quiet and would never speak out against our administration. Is there any other example of favoritism or inconsistent disciplinary procedures?

Also, I'd like to point out an observation, if you have read the testimony in support of Ireland, everyone who testified in support does not work under his leadership. How would these individuals even understand what it's like working for or under him? Does this not highlight the lack of support he has from the field personnel? Or even his administrative staff? Ocean safety separated from HESD for a reason. Ocean safety was sick and tired of both Dr Irelands and Ian Santee's mismanagement, dishonesty and micromanagement.

I was able to watch the previous appointment hearing and the recent interview on Spotlight HNN. On both the hearing and on Spotlight, he reiterated that the department is hiring a bunch of new EMTs and will be receiving 15 new or remounted ambulances. He also stated that we have funding for a brand new ambulance unit KAIMUKI. During the previous reappointment hearing he was asked by council members Weyer, Tupola and Kiaaina if he could place ambulances in their respective districts. He was told by Kiaaina that she would be excited to work with him in getting him the funding for another windward ambulance preferably stationed somewhere near HPU.

Dr Ireland, if you are reading this, I'd like you to answer some questions. We have had funding for the Waikele unit for 2 years. As of right now, there is NO Waikele unit. Why not? Where is the funding going for that ALS ambulance that is supposed to cover the central Oahu region? Over the last couple of years you promised everyone Waikele, Kalihi, UH, a Kakaako and a KAIMUKI ambulance. As of right now..... Nothing. Just empty promises. We are more than tired of the constant lip service. We are burnt and want to see action. WE WANT MORE ALS RIGS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Since the Dept is supposed to be getting 15 more ambulances, why do we have to wait for the "funding"? Why not just

give the council members what they want? Give them the three ambulances they are asking for. You can easily give them the rigs within the next few months. Why not in the meantime place those rigs at existing ambulance units in or near their districts? Or work with HFD and place the ambulances in the corresponding fire stations. It's a win win. We get more ALS units to help with the call volume, the council members get what they want but most importantly, the community gets a service that they are needing. We have the MICTs. You just need to redistribute the MICTs. There is no need for double MICT rigs as long as we have enough transport ambulances to make up the difference.

Also I'd like to comment on the Fire/EMS task force. It is everyone's understanding that the individuals who are supposed to be on this task force are supposed to be individuals that are unbiased or indifferent. Individuals who are supposed to look at the merger from a neutral standpoint to come up with an outcome that's honest, not based on personal opinion. It's being said that EMS 2 Jeff Zukernick has publicly stated that he is against the EMS/FIRE merger and requested to be on this Task force. It is rumored that he was appointed to the task force by Dr Ireland. This is a prime example of our administration doing what benefits them!. Not the community or the majority within the department.

In closing. It's interesting to see how much support Dr Ireland has been getting from the positive testimony that I have read. But let's be honest. These individuals are obviously politically important and influential within state government and the medical community. Dr Ireland may be a very nice and personable guy to associate with and a very good friend to some. He may also be a really good Doctor. But none of these individuals work under his leadership. They have no idea what is going on within HESD. We need better leadership.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chase Aalborg	aalborc@ah.org	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Adventist Health Castle	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 08:09 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Edward Fujioka	puunui@msn.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 08:39 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lisa Young	lisyoung96822@Yahoo.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 10:05 AM

Testimony:
Aloha Chair Okimoto and Public Safety Commitee members. I am writing in very strong opposition to the nomination of Dr Jim Ireland as Director of HESD. I would like to point out a few facts. Honolulu Ocean Safety left HESD due to their dissatisfaction with Dr Irelands leadership or lack thereof. Dr. Ireland speak or makes promises that sounds impressive, but they are unfulfilled promises and made-up ideas. We have always known Dr. Ireland to shot from the hip and make

choice without proper assessments or analytical data. One example is the two planned "New" units. The Kaimuki units is not proper location for any additional unit. The Metro units are taking the bulk of the calls and that is where the two units need to be located. AMR and Fed Fire mutual aid calls are unacceptable and unreasonable to reply and "Not Worry" about units closing because we can use them. Fed Fire is not happy with running calls away from their primary first in areas and with the Trump administration it is expected that orders will come to end or limit the mutual aid calls. They will only respond on mass casualty incidents.

EMS needs a director that can move us into the future the current system is unsustainable

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Veteran Paramedics	hnlems@honolulu.gov	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Golden Age of EMS	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 10:40 AM

Testimony:

We are a small group of Veteran Paramedics that we call the Golden Age of HNL EMS. Those days have vanished under the current leadership. We are vigorously opposed to the nomination of Dr Jim Ireland as Director of EMS. Dr. Ireland has had 2 terms as Director one started in 2011 and the most recent in 2020 to present. Each term moral has fallen lower and lower. There are larger than normal retirements of good, experienced hard-working Paramedics that have left Honolulu EMS. We are disappointed that Dr Irelands nomination is still being considered. We realized that many supporters are "outsiders" and have never worked under Dr. Ireland as first responders. We have no concerns in his medical skills however being a good doctor does not equate to having the skills and knowledge of leading first responders that work hard every day responding to 911 calls and taking care of the sick and injured.

Dr Ireland lacks the mindset of running an emergency service that runs 24/7/365, the physical and mental toll it takes, having proper plans in place for mass casualties. Dr Ireland and his staff lack the training and knowledge to ensure the safety and well-being of medics and EMTs that pound the streets daily working long hours, sweat in the heat, go hungry because there is no time to eat, work in blood-stained uniforms. A prime example is the Kaneohe unit ambulance fire that for the first time a patient was killed under our care and a Paramedic was critically burnt. Thank God he survived, and we hope someone is following up with him regularly checking on his physical and mental well-being. The incident should never have happened, the regular Maintenace we had on equipment was terminated we assume to save money. The service on O2 systems and equipment was never done, it's time for Dr Ireland to be done too. Mahalo for your time

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Eddie Fujioka	puunui@msn.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 11:45 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jeff Zuckernick	code900@aol.com	96734

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 11:58 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Tiffany Allen	tiffany.lightfoot@gmr.net	96701

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 12:05 PM

Testimony:

Thank you for hearing Resolution 25-11 regarding the confirmation of Dr. James Ireland as the Director of Emergency Services of the City and County of Honolulu. I've worked with Dr. Ireland for over 20 years. I appreciate his foresight and wisdom as it relates to managing both emergency medical conditions and systems. He has a unique appreciation for the patient, the provider, and the system. Dr. Ireland understands EMS is changing just like all of healthcare is changing. He has the knowledge, skills, ability and desire to lead EMS through these changes. I trust that he will continue to serve as a sound leader who appreciates and can successfully navigate the many complexities that managing a large EMS system present. I support Dr. Ireland as Emergency Services Director. Mahalo.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lynell DaMate	Lynelld808@gmail.com	96712

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 12:11 PM

Testimony:

I was born and raised here on the North Shore and I am firmly supporting the confirmation of Dr. Jim Ireland.

His unwavering advocacy of a NSFRC and Ambulance Unit, is encouraging for all of us who sees the need for his strong leadership.

His leadership will truly be beneficial for both residents and visitors alike.

Mahalo Nui for your time and consideration

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ralph Goto	ralphgoto@gmail.com	96744

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 12:24 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Michael Champion	mchamp@hawaii.edu	96814

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 01:51 PM

Testimony:

In my personal capacity, I am writing to express support for Dr. Jim Ireland’s nomination to serve as the Director of Emergency Services for the City and County of Honolulu. I have had the privilege of collaborating with Dr. Ireland on the

Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement Program (C.O.R.E.), where I have witnessed his exceptional responsiveness, dedication, and commitment to safeguarding the well-being of our community, particularly our vulnerable neighbors. His continued leadership will enhance our emergency services and further protect the well-being of our community.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jami Strapple	stra9523@pacificu.edu	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 02:07 PM

Testimony:

I am pleased to support Dr. James Ireland for the reappointment of Director of Honolulu Emergency Services Department. Having worked closely with him over the past 10 years, I can attest to his exceptional skill, professionalism, and genuine compassion for patients and the community. He is an outstanding physician and caring leader who inspires trust. I believe he is the best candidate for this critical role.

Mahalo for your time!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Vicki Goto	goozgirl@hawaii.rr.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 03:56 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

I am writing in staunch support of reinstating Dr. James Ireland as Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. Dr. Ireland has dedicated his life to caring for and improving the lives of all who live in our community. His compassion for people, his commitment to serve to the best of his abilities, his extensive medical experience, and his humility are what makes Dr. Ireland the right person to continue leading DESD.

Mahalo,

Vicki Goto

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Raeann Aquino	raeannaquino@gmail.com	96797
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 04:36 PM

Testimony:

I support Dr. James Ireland for his reappointment to serve as the Director of Emergency Services of the City and County of Honolulu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Shevaun Mix	vaun7773@gmail.com	96706

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 04:47 PM

Testimony:
I strongly support the reappointment of James Ireland as the Emergency Medical Director. He has demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication to our emergency medical services , ensuring the highest standards of care for our community.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Evan Yamagishi	evaneezer49@hotmail.com	80924
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 05:09 PM

Testimony:
I fully support the nomination of Dr. James Ireland to serve as the Director of Emergency Services for the City & County of Honolulu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kekoa Burgundy	kekoaburgundy@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 05:27 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Moku Nui	huhuhawaiian808@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 05:45 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mufi Hannemann	mhannemann@hawaiilodging.org	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 06:55 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jane Doe	mypopthecop@gmail.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 07:54 PM

Testimony:
I was a decade long employee at city and county respectfully and left. After hearing what has transpired at city and county Ems I oppose the nomination of director Jim Ireland.

Name:	Email:	Zip:

T T	jubjub414@hotmail.com	96789
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 2, 2025 @ 08:03 PM

Testimony:

Ems is morale is at an all time low. It's to the direct lack of leadership from dr. Ireland. Sorry to say, this is a full time gig, not a part time while you have a clinic on the side.

Please put someone who has EMS fully in their hearts and minds.

Name: Nicholas Higa	Email: nhiga@honolulu.gov	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 2, 2025 @ 08:19 PM

Testimony:

No thank you. Let’s try something different. Many things remain in terrible condition and unresolved.

It’s gonna be a NO for me, dawg.

Sorry

Name: Robert Umiamaka	Email: keanapuni1@yahoo.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 2, 2025 @ 09:08 PM

Testimony:

Aloha hearings committee members. I have known James for almost 20 years now. We have gone through the Sheriffs department academy together and remained close friends throughout the years. I’m in strong support of his conformation as I know first hand of his ability to lead and listen to the men and women while continuing to join them in everyday duties. James relentless and committed mindset and willingness to work with all agencies no matter city or state is admirable to all. Please confirm Mr. James Ireland for Director of EMS as he is a valuable and tremendous asset to the State of Hawaii. Mahalo Nui Loa.

Name: EMS Employee	Email: emshnl@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 2, 2025 @ 09:09 PM

Testimony:

I am an employee of Honolulu EMS and have been working for the past 10+ years with this department. I strongly oppose the reappointment of Dr. Ireland and Ian Santee. This administration have made numerous empty promises to employees about plans for a better working environment and failed to keep this this department properly staffed. They

have shown continuous favoritism to certain employees and have shown retaliation to any one who has the courage to speak up. Under there direction they have made it a priority to focus resources on special projects that benefit themselves and create teams who are staffed with obvious favorites instead of addressing department wide issues such as burn out, mental health and employee retention.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jade Gusman	jadegusman61@gmail.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 09:19 PM

Testimony:

Support!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Larry McElheny	lkmcelheny@gmail.com	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 2, 2025 @ 09:27 PM

Testimony:

Aloha

I strongly support the confirmation of Dr. Ireland as EMS Director.

His interactions with our community have been exemplary.

Mahalo

Larry McElheny

50 year Pupukea resident

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Honolulu Paramedic	honolulumedic@gmail.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 09:49 PM

Testimony:

Dear Honorable City Council Members,

I am almost positive you will see many testimonies in favor of Dr. Irelands reappointment, but you must really look hard at where those testimonies are coming from. You will see many from friends and colleagues (from his private medical business or somehow tied to that) but very little testimonies by those that currently work under him in the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. As of April 2nd, I see testimonies from his PIO Shayne Enright (whom he allows to work from home 5 days a week), Supervisor Sunny Johnson (whom he allows a special assignment / 40 hour work week off the road) and lastly Jeff Zuckernick (his dear friend and recent hire to the position of Assistant Chief of EMS) but the testimonies in favor stop there. I can say with great certainty that MANY of the men and women in HESD are too afraid of

retaliation and unwilling to come forward and express their true feelings about Dr. Ireland and his Deputy Director Ian Santee.

As a 18 year veteran of Honolulu EMS, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the potential reappointment of Dr. James Ireland to the position of Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. While Dr. Ireland's tenure has seen some accomplishments, I believe there are significant issues that warrant consideration before confirming his reappointment.

First, there have been numerous complaints by his subordinates and public concerns regarding the efficiency and responsiveness of the department under his leadership. The Honolulu Emergency Services Department is critical in providing swift, life-saving services, and it is essential that the leadership of this department be capable of not only managing resources effectively but also fostering a healthy workplace by improving morale and retention.

Unfortunately, there have been many instances of miscommunication, inadequate staffing, and logistical delays that undermine the department's ability to serve the residents of Honolulu optimally putting lives at risk.

Moreover, there is a need for greater transparency and accountability in the department's operations. As a current EMS employee and resident of this city, we deserve to know that the Emergency Services Department is being managed with the utmost care and responsibility. The challenges we face require leadership that is proactive, responsive, and willing to make tough decisions to ensure that we have the best emergency response system possible.

I strongly urge you to carefully assess Dr. Ireland's and his deputy's leadership during their current tenure and consider the potential impact of reappointing them. It is vital that we place trust in a director who will meet the high expectations of public safety, efficiency, and effective management.

Please start by looking into the following...

-Look into the numerous ambulance closures daily, putting lives at risk. (If the 2025 NYE fire tragedy happened an hour later, 5 city ambulances would have been shut down and unable to respond)

-Look into the prolonged response times and inability to meet nationwide standards due to closures and overall lack of resources.

-Look into poor billing recoupment numbers despite promising the city that this administration could outperform the State Department of Health after taking over EMS.

-Talk with paramedics and see how terrible moral truly is.

-Look into the misuse of department funds.

-Inquire about Ian Santee's newly formed "Specialized Community Medicine" branch and how personnel and vehicles were acquired there and the cost to store them.

-Look into the poorly maintained ambulance fleet and inquire why crews are being forced to work in unsafe and mechanically unsound apparatus.

-Why does the department have to rely so heavily on AMR (private ambulance) and the Federal Fire Department for mutual aids.

-Why did Ocean Safety petition so hard to leave HESD under this administration?

-Why does the majority of the EMS department wish to explore the opportunity of merging EMS and HFD?

I urge you all to start with these topics and meet with the men and women in uniform to tell you the truth about what really goes on. Again, many are reluctant to speak publicly in fear of retaliation from this administration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust you will make a decision that is in the best interest of the residents and visitors of Honolulu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kekoa Burgundy	kekoaburgundy@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 10:03 PM

Testimony:

To the Honorable Members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am writing to express my deep disappointment that, despite the overwhelming evidence presented regarding the failures of James Ireland's leadership, the political environment appears poised to allow his reappointment as Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. It is disheartening that facts and firsthand accounts of mismanagement, ethical breaches, and favoritism are being disregarded in favor of personal and political interests.

Many of the individuals publicly supporting his reappointment lack direct experience working under his leadership and therefore cannot speak to the toxic workplace culture he has fostered. It should be alarming to all that there is little to no support for him from the EMTs, paramedics, or even staff from his own medical practice—those who would have the most insight into his management style and decision-making. That absence speaks volumes. The few within the department who are publicly testifying in his favor are the very individuals benefiting directly from his leadership—whether through

special assignments, questionable hiring practices, or preferential treatment. Their support is not a reflection of strong leadership but rather a demonstration of how favoritism has created a system where loyalty is rewarded over merit and integrity.

Since the previous hearing, rather than reflecting on the concerns raised and taking steps to address them, James Ireland has doubled down on his irresponsible management. Instead of engaging with frontline EMS workers and giving them an opportunity to voice their concerns, he has focused on superficial changes, such as testing new uniforms—an initiative that does nothing to resolve the real issues affecting department morale and operations. Notably, there was no mention of uniform replacements in his budget presentation, raising questions about his priorities and financial planning. Additionally, with a task force now exploring a potential merger between HFD and EMS, spending taxpayer dollars on new uniforms seems particularly wasteful. If a merger is recommended, the city could end up spending twice—once to outfit EMS employees and again to transition them into HFD-issued gear.

As if these misplaced priorities weren't enough, he has also hired a contract employee to assist the Assistant Chief of Operations Jeff Zuckernick—a position that has never been warranted in the past. This Assistant Chief, notably, continues to moonlight as a full-time employee at a private ambulance company on Kauai every weekend, and his newly appointed assistant is a recently retired member of that very same private ambulance company. Instead of directing funding toward critical needs such as equipment, supplies, or field operations, he is diverting resources to personal pet projects and creating unnecessary positions for his inner circle. Can the department and the public expect even more city EMS contracts to be funneled to this private ambulance company now that ethical boundaries continue to be so blatantly disregarded?

Equally troubling is the refusal of some council members to engage with their constituents on this matter. Many who reached out with genuine concerns were ignored, suggesting that political ideology and personal alliances are being prioritized over the well-being of our first responders and the safety of our community. This lack of accountability from our elected officials only serves to erode public trust.

James Ireland's tenure has been marked by conflicts of interest, unethical leadership, and policies that have actively harmed EMS operations. The staffing shortages, low morale, and operational failures that have resulted under his leadership are undeniable. Yet, rather than addressing these critical issues, he has been allowed to manipulate narratives, divert resources to pet projects, and promote personal allies at the expense of department integrity.

The reappointment of James Ireland sends a clear and troubling message: that those in power can operate without accountability, that the voices of those on the front lines are secondary to political convenience, and that the decline of a critical public safety service is an acceptable cost.

I urge the Council to reconsider this decision and stand for leadership that prioritizes ethics, fairness, and public safety over personal and political gain.

Sincerely,

Koa

Name:	Email:	Zip:
EMS Veteran	emsvet@yahoo.com	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 2, 2025 @ 10:08 PM

Testimony:

Following the last committee meeting, it is my understanding that the there was much SLANDER happening around city hall regarding the testifiers Laurie Grace, Jonathan Lee, Edward Fujioka and Christopher Sloman. Although all have since separated from the Honolulu Emergency Services Department, all of what they said is 100% true and factual. I urge you to watch their in person testimonies in their entirety and sit down with any of them, and you will learn what really happens in the HESD. Bless them for giving voice to the voiceless.

It is time for the council and the mayor's office to merge Honolulu EMS with the Honolulu Fire Department, follow any recommendations set forth by the Honolulu Fire Commission and not a mayor appointed director and deputy director, all to provide better pre hospital medical services to the residence and visitors of Honolulu County.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jason Sanchez	jason.sanchez@gmr.net	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 3, 2025 @ 06:33 AM

Testimony:

In support of Dr. James Ireland as the Director of Emergency Services of the City and County of Honolulu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chris Sloman	crsloman@gmail.com	96720
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 3, 2025 @ 08:19 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Kia'āina, and members of the Public Safety Committee,

My name is Chris Sloman, former Acting Chief and Assistant Chief of Operations for Honolulu EMS. I speak today in opposition to the reappointment of Dr. James Ireland as Director of Emergency Services, based on my firsthand experience and the persistent systemic issues within EMS under his leadership.

I acknowledge the support Dr. Ireland has received from community leaders and stakeholders, reflecting his engagement

in specific initiatives like CORE and North Shore planning. However, the voices of EMS personnel—those who work directly under him—tell a different story. Morale remains at historic lows, unit closures persist, and response times fail to meet national standards, as highlighted by veteran paramedics and current employees in today's testimonies. These are not new problems; they've worsened over Dr. Ireland's tenure, despite promises of improvement.

Leadership must prioritize accountability and operational excellence, not just external partnerships. The removal of the unfilled Chief of EMS position has left the division rudderless. Staffing shortages, inadequate equipment, and a lack of a strategic plan continue to jeopardize public safety. Favoritism in promotions and resource allocation further erodes trust within the department.

I urge the Council to consider a commission-based leadership model, as adopted by Ocean Safety and the Fire Department, to ensure transparency and meritocracy. The task force exploring EMS integration with HFD offers a path forward, but reappointing Dr. Ireland risks perpetuating the status quo.

Honolulu deserves an EMS system that thrives, not just survives. I respectfully request you reject this nomination and seek leadership that can deliver sustainable solutions for our first responders and community. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Gihye YI	Makcahman1@korea.net	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 3, 2025 @ 08:52 AM

Testimony:

I strongly oppose the nomination of Dr Jim Ireland. I have so much negative stories and comments from EMS Paramedics regarding poor leadership. EMS is years if not decades behind HFD and HPD. I did research and cannot find any SOP or near term and long-term action plans for EMS and HESD as a whole. Personnel are over worked, grossly under paid, disrespected. The real Jim Ireland is unknow to the general public and even to near all of the testimony in support of him. They have never worked under him, worked under his direct cruel, discriminatory treatment mostly of non-white employees. Most of the admin staff are white therefore that has led to a cultural difference and mis management of an Emergency First Responder service. EMS has closed too many units and nearly every day. Moral is the lowest level in history of HNLEMS! People will continue to leave, and EMS will be forced to hire low qualified candidates that will eventually leave the service.

Dr Ireland has not spear headed academies there were at least 2 EMT academies at the old Waimano Home. KCC has had academies for years. There are many in accurate statement in written testimony submitted. To get the truth do not confirm Dr Ireland today but differ it can go out and speak to the Paramedics and dispatchers at EMS to get real data. There is no harm in differing his nomination but there will be harm and even possible injuries and daeth with 4 more years of Jim Ireland.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Diana Chun	chundiana@hotmail.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 3, 2025 @ 11:35 AM

Testimony:

As someone with enough time in the department to have seen a variety of leaders, I can honestly say that I have seen a lot of positive change under Dr. Ireland's leadership. Many of the people who seem to have issue with him are those who like the status quo, are just trying to ride out their time, or have difficulty dealing with his personality. Dr. Ireland is a very driven person who sees a problem and works to find a solution. His out-of-the-box thinking and perseverance can cause some to be taken aback, however, these are the very qualities that are needed to make this department more efficient. I know that the majority of my peers feel the same as I do. The community we serve has changed and, prior to Dr. Ireland's Directorship, we had lagged behind in adapting to those changing needs. Under his leadership our department has made, and continues to make huge strides in enhancing the operations of the Emergency Services Department and it's individual divisions. Dr. Ireland is constantly finding ways for ESD to work in tandem with other City agencies to maximize the effectiveness and efficient use of our combined resources, eliminating unnecessary redundancies and eliminating unwarranted costs. One of ESD's more prominent endeavors is the development of our evolving Community Medicine program. It is just one example of an idea that became a reality due to Dr. Irelands drive to have the Emergency Services Department and, by extension the City and County of Honolulu, Hospitals, Medical and Behavior health providers work together to better serve the Communities growing and every changing needs. This is why I think Dr. Ireland should be confirmed to continue to serve as Director of Emergency Medical Services. There's still a lot more work to be done, and he has the energy and the drive to accomplish them.

Office of the City Clerk
Attention: Information Section
530 South King Street Room 100
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Recommendation in support of Dr. James Ireland as Director of the Department of Emergency Medical Services
RESO 25-011 CONFIRMING THE NOMINATION OF JAMES H. E. IRELAND, M.D., TO SERVE AS THE DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

Dear Honorable Members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am writing to fully support Dr. James Ireland for his second term as Director of the Department of Emergency Medical Services. Dr. Ireland has demonstrated strong leadership skills, has proactively problem solved complex issues facing the entire City, and has a proven record of genuine commitment to the community during his first term as Director of EMS.

In his first four years as director, Dr. Ireland created effective programs to address the needs of the chronic homeless population. CORE services, which was developed under his leadership, has improved emergency room services at various hospitals while reducing the strain on emergency rooms. His innovative program of providing direct, non-emergency services directly to the homeless on the street, has lowered emergency room wait times and freed up critical ambulance and other emergency resources, such as 911 calls. He has also been involved in establishing Medical Respite facilities to assist in transitioning the homeless off the streets in our neighborhoods and public areas.

In order to deal with chronic staffing shortages, Dr. Ireland has also entered partnerships with the Community Colleges to expedite training of high school and college students for EMS positions. He established a partnership with community college programs to improve staffing levels and create meaningful career opportunities for local students. The vacancy rate in the department is the lowest in ten years and his efforts have improved the department's response capabilities and strengthened ties with the community.

Dr. Ireland's experience, dedication, and ability to find solutions to complex issues make him well-suited to continue leading the Department of Emergency Medical Services. He is not one to sit back and wait for Human Resources to deal with recruitment issues or not deal with employees who have performance issues. I have worked as a manager in DHR for 25+ years and have seen many leaders who are not willing to be proactive, make meaningful changes, and deal with the labor unions who are obligated to support disgruntled employees. I have worked with Dr. Ireland in previous administrations, and I strongly support his confirmation as Director.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robin Chun-Carmichael

Retired City Manager
Department of Human Resources

3356 Alani Drive
Honolulu HI 96822
rchun3356@gmail.com
(808) 722-2165

Chair Waters, Vice-Chair Weyer, Councilmembers,

I am writing to offer my support for the reappointment of Dr. Jim Ireland as Director of Emergency Services of The City and County of Honolulu.

I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Dr. Ireland for almost 20 years, both as a practicing Emergency Physician and during my tenure as District EMS Physician for Oahu through the Hawai ‘i State Department of Health (2014–2023).

Throughout his career, Dr. Ireland has been a steadfast advocate for patients. He has been a driving force behind improvements in EMS clinical care and transport processes. He has worked tirelessly to support our acute care facilities and to strengthen the relationships between EMS teams and Emergency Departments—both through daily collaboration and unified response during times of crisis. Jim has consistently stepped up to ensure patients received timely care, especially when the prehospital system was under strain from mass casualty incidents, seasonal surges, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Ireland’s leadership bridges the prehospital and hospital systems with clinical excellence and a solutions-oriented mindset. He has championed the quality of EMS care and facilitated communication and processes that keep our shared patients at the center of all efforts.

His reappointment would be a continued asset to our community and the broader health system we all depend on.

I fully support Dr. Ireland’s continued leadership.

Sincerely,
Rick Bruno, MD, MBA

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

March 30, 2025

To: Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Kia'āina, and members of the City and County Committee on Public Safety and Customer Services (PS)

The Hawai'i Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to support the confirmation of Dr. Jim Ireland as Director of Honolulu's Emergency Services Department.

Dr. Ireland's extensive experience in the field of EMS includes:

- Service in the U.S. Army Reserve, where he was trained as a combat medic,
- His role as a physician medical director for multiple ambulance services,
- A private practice physician since 2005, and
- Serving as the Director of the Emergency Services Department from 2010-2013 and again since 2020.

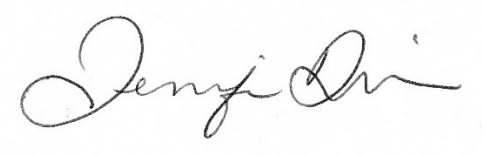
These roles showcase his commitment to public health and safety, as well as his ability to improve and enhance the quality of Oahu's emergency medical services.

Furthermore, his position as an Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at the John A. Burns School of Medicine demonstrates his dedication to educating future medical professionals, which is especially important given the current state of Hawaii's healthcare workforce.

HMSA has worked collaboratively with Dr. Ireland over the years. I believe he has a firm grasp of the needs of our community and will prioritize the safety and well-being of the people he serves.

Thank you for the opportunity to support Dr. Jim Ireland's reappointment as the Director of Emergency Medical Services for the City and County of Honolulu.

Sincerely,



Jennifer A. Diesman
Senior Vice President
Government Policy and Advocacy

Dear Honolulu City Council Members,

I strongly support the reappointment of Dr. James Ireland as Director of Emergency Medical Services. Having worked under his leadership for over a decade in his private practice, I can attest to his exceptional qualities as a leader, mentor, and advocate for both staff and patients.

Dr. Ireland fosters a supportive environment that prioritizes professional growth and well-being. His encouragement and resources were instrumental in my journey to becoming an RN, and he continues to support my pursuit of a master's degree to become a family nurse practitioner. His dedication to education and staff development is unmatched.

His passion for EMS is evident in his commitment to improving services, leadership, and operational efficiency. He embodies fairness, responsibility, and generosity—qualities essential for this role. Under his guidance, EMS has made strides in addressing challenges, and I am confident he will continue to drive progress.

Please consider this testimony as a heartfelt endorsement of Dr. Ireland's reappointment. His leadership is invaluable to our community.

Sincerely,

Christina Hafoka

For Resolution 25-011

March 28, 2025

Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair and Presiding Officer
Honolulu City Council

I support.

I support the confirmation of Dr. James Ireland continuing his role as Honolulu Emergency Services Department Director.

I reside in District 6.

MATT WELLS

Name

Signature

3/28/2025

Date

Office of the City Clerk
Attention: Information Section
530 South King Street, Room 100
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Honolulu City Council Members:

I am writing in support of the reappointment of James Ireland as the Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. I have worked with Dr. Ireland for many years and know him to be an extremely fair, caring and supportive employer. He is always generous with his time, knowledge and guidance and has helped so many people in our community.

I have seen how dedicated and how much heart Dr. Ireland has for HEDS. His commitment and compassion for the well-being and betterment of the department, its employees and the people they serve is evident in his actions and decisions. He truly goes above and beyond in all he does.

As a resident of this county, I believe we are very fortunate to have Dr. Ireland leading HESD and I wholeheartedly support his reappointment as HESD Director.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Chun

500 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD
BOX 165
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

PHONE: (808)356-4400
FAX: (808)356-4499

March 31, 2025

Office of the City Clerk
Attention: Information Section
City & County of Honolulu
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

My name is Gary Yabuta, and I am the Executive Director for the Hawaii High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). The State of Hawaii is among 33 nationwide HIDTA regions and the mission of each HIDTA region is to help and enhance local, state and federal law enforcement agencies with the resources necessary to dismantle and disrupt drug organizations, enterprises, and operations. We are a grant-funded program under the Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy. Before becoming the Hawaii HIDTA Executive Director, I was the Chief of Police for the Maui Police Department.

I strongly support the nomination of Dr. James Ireland for the continued position of Director of the Emergency Medical Services Department.

Dr. Ireland is a profound leader whom I collaborate with on a strategy to reduce drug related deaths, in particular Fentanyl overdoses. The strategy includes Dr. Ireland's immediate reporting of suspected fentanyl overdoses to the Hawaii High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. This information is disseminated to Honolulu's public health and law enforcement sectors, who are responsible for infiltrating the area of the overdoses and applying the appropriate treatment and rehabilitation protocol and identifying and apprehending the drug trafficker who sold the drugs that caused the overdose--thereby preventing further overdoses.

I have accompanied Dr. Ireland while he spoke directly to the community and his dialogue was real and meaningful. More so, Dr. Ireland has the ability to speak to any audience and his knowledge of emergency medical response management is overwhelming. His leadership is navigated by his knowledge and love for his staff, and the community's welfare.

The City and County of Honolulu has a rare opportunity to accept Dr. Ireland's service as Honolulu's Director of the Emergency Medical Services, which I believe is in the best interests for our community.

Sincerely,

Gary Yabuta
Executive Director
Hawaii High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

Aloha Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am honored to submit this testimony in strong support of Dr. James Ireland's reappointment as EMS Director. I have had the privilege of working alongside Dr. Ireland for many years, during which time I witnessed firsthand his exceptional leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment to serving the people of O‘ahu.

Throughout my experience working with Dr. Ireland, he has consistently demonstrated the qualities of a great mentor and motivational colleague. His vast medical knowledge, coupled with his humble and approachable personality, makes him uniquely qualified to lead in any position he fulfills. Dr. Ireland's ability to inspire those around him while maintaining a calm and focused demeanor has been invaluable in both routine operations and crisis situations.

Dr. Ireland's record of outstanding civil service is truly worth commending. His contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic were instrumental in helping our community through unprecedented challenges. Furthermore, Dr. Ireland was integral in developing the CORE program for the homeless—a vital initiative that continues to provide essential care and support for O‘ahu's underserved population.

Beyond these remarkable achievements, Dr. Ireland remains steadfast in his commitment to providing excellent emergency care to our communities on a daily basis. His dedication to ensuring the safety and health of O‘ahu residents is evident in every aspect of his work, making him an invaluable asset to the EMS team and our city as a whole.

In closing, I fully support Dr. James Ireland's reappointment as EMS Director. His proven track record of leadership, medical expertise, and compassionate service makes him the ideal candidate to continue leading our EMS department with excellence.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimi Prentice

March 30, 2025

Tim Sakahara
tsakahara@gmail.com

Office of the City Clerk
Attention: Information Section
530 South King Street, Room 100
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: **Strong Support for Reso 25-011**, Appointment of Dr. James Ireland as Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department (HESD)

Dear Honorable Members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am writing to express my strong and unequivocal support for Resolution 25-011, which recommends the appointment of Dr. James Ireland as Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department (HESD).

Dr. Ireland is an exceptional public servant who has consistently demonstrated unwavering dedication to the well-being of our community. His commitment to the safety and welfare of Honolulu's residents is evident in his tireless efforts and proactive approach to emergency services.

Throughout his career, Dr. Ireland has proven himself to be a highly capable and effective leader. He possesses the critical thinking skills, experience, and sound judgment necessary to make crucial decisions, often under intense pressure and within limited timeframes. His ability to remain calm and focused in challenging situations is a testament to his professionalism and dedication.

Dr. Ireland's leadership has consistently resulted in positive outcomes for the City and County of Honolulu. His strategic vision and collaborative approach have fostered a more efficient and responsive HESD. He understands the intricate complexities of emergency management and is committed to implementing best practices to ensure the highest level of service for our community.

His contributions extend beyond fulfilling his duties. Dr. Ireland actively engages with community stakeholders, listens to their concerns, and works diligently to address their needs. He is a true advocate for the people of Honolulu and consistently strives to improve the quality of life for all residents.

In summary, Dr. Ireland's proven leadership, dedication to public service, and unwavering commitment to the safety of our community make him an ideal candidate for Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. His appointment will undoubtedly strengthen our emergency response capabilities and enhance the overall safety and resilience of our city.

I urge the Honolulu City Council to approve Resolution 25-011 and confirm the appointment of Dr. James Ireland as Director of HESD. His leadership will undeniably make Honolulu a better and safer place for all.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Tim Sakahara
City & County of Honolulu resident

HAWAII FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 1463, AFL-CIO
1018 PALM DRIVE, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814-1929
TELEPHONE (808) 949-1566 FAX: (808) 952-6003
WEBSITE: www.hawaiifirefighters.org

Honolulu County Council
Committee on Public Safety & Customer Services
Regular Meeting
City Council Chamber
Thursday, April 3, 2025
1:00 P.M.

Testimony by

Hawaii Fire Fighters Association

Resolution 25-11: Nomination of James H.E. Ireland, M.D. as Director of Emergency Services

Dear Chair Okimoto, Vice-Chair Kiaʻāina, and members of the Committee

The Hawaii Fire Fighters Association (HFFA), Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO represents more than 2,000 professional active-duty fire fighters throughout the State. The HFFA, on behalf of its members, **supports Resolution 25-11 the confirmation of Dr. James Ireland** for director of the City and County of Honolulu Department of Emergency Services.

HFFA has worked with Dr. Ireland cooperatively throughout the years in different capacities. HFFA has had positive working experiences with James Ireland and appreciates his genuine commitment to service excellence as well as his experience and background in various areas within both the private and public sectors.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we urge the Committee's favorable action on Resolution 25-11.

Thank you,

Robert H. Lee

HFFA President

Ko Olina
HAWAI'I

March 27, 2025

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair and Presiding Officer and Members
HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

SUBJECT: Council Resolution No. 25-11: Confirming the Nomination of James H.E. Ireland, M.D. as the City and County of Honolulu's Director of Emergency Services

Dear Chair Waters and Councilmembers:

On behalf of the Ko Olina Community Association, Inc. and the Ko Olina Resort Operators Association, Inc., we are writing in support of the reappointment of Dr. James Ireland as the City and County of Honolulu's Director of Emergency Services.

Since March 2020, Dr. Ireland has proactively engaged with Ko Olina Resort to assess this community's needs and has responded with creative private/public partnership recommendations to address timely accessibility to emergency services for our resort guests, employees and residents, including those in neighboring westside communities.

We are confident in Dr. Ireland's capability to efficiently manage and lead the Emergency Medical Services and Ocean Safety divisions for the City and County of Honolulu and ask that you consider allowing him to continue to serve our community.

With much appreciation,

Ken Williams
General Manager
Ko Olina Community Association, Inc.

Sweetie Nelson
Director of Destination Marketing
Ko Olina Resort Operators
Association, Inc.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 1, 2025

TO: The Honorable Councilmember Waters, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Customer Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **RESO 25-011 CONFIRMING THE NOMINATION OF JAMES H. E. IRELAND, M.D., TO SERVE AS THE DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

Hearing: April 3, 2025, 1:00 p.m.

I am writing in strong support for the reappointment of Dr. Jim Ireland as the Director of Emergency Services of the City and County of Honolulu.

Dr. Ireland has been an strong leader in managing the Department of Emergency Services (DES) and has demonstrated exceptional dedication, expertise, and commitment. His tenure has been marked by significant accomplishments and innovative approaches that have impacted emergency services on O'ahu.

Under Dr. Ireland's leadership, Honolulu's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) have seen improvements in response times, patient care, and overall efficiency. Dr. Ireland's ability to adapt to new challenges, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, has been instrumental in keeping the City and County of Honolulu prepared for unforeseen emergencies. His proactive approach in improving protocols, advancing public health initiatives, and implementing best practices has helped ensure that our first responders are equipped with the tools and training needed to serve effectively.

I have worked with Dr. Ireland for over 16 years and he has fostered a culture of collaboration and transparency within the department, consistently engaging with community stakeholders and the public to improve emergency services. His steady leadership and clear vision have earned him the respect and trust from his colleagues and the public.

It is with great confidence that I recommend Dr. Jim Ireland for reappointment as the Director of Emergency Services. His leadership, expertise, and dedication to the citizens of Honolulu are unparalleled, and I am certain that he will continue to lead the department with distinction.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of Dr. Jim Ireland's nomination as the Director of Emergency Services of the City and County of Honolulu.

THE RESORT GROUP

March 26, 2025

Honolulu City Council
530 S King St, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Counsel Resolution No. 25-11: Confirming the Nomination of Dr. Jim H.E. Ireland's Reappointment as the Director of Emergency Services of the City and County of Honolulu.

Dear Honolulu City Council Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the reappointment of Dr. Jim H.E. Ireland as the Director of Emergency Services of the City and County of Honolulu. Dr. Ireland has demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and expertise in his role, ensuring the highest level of emergency medical services for our community.

I firmly believe that Dr. Ireland's continued leadership will further enhance the capabilities and impact of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. I respectfully urge you to support his reappointment and allow him to continue his invaluable service to our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey R. Stone
Founder & CEO
The Resort Group

1100 Alakea Street, 25th Floor · Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 531-9761 · Fax: (808) 531-1144

THE RESORT GROUP

March 27, 2025

Honolulu City Council
530 S King St, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Strong Support for Dr. James Ireland's Reappointment

Dear Honolulu City Council Members,

We are writing this letter in strong support of reappointing Dr. Jim Ireland as Director of Emergency Services. Dr. Ireland has shown great leadership, dedication, and, commitment in his many years of service to our kama'āina and island visitors.

I firmly believe that Dr. Ireland's continued leadership will further strengthen the capabilities and impact of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. I respectfully urge you to support

Thank you,

Burkley and Chynna Showe

1100 Alakea Street, 25th Floor · Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 531-9761 · Fax: (808) 531-1144

Administration
640 ʻUlukahiki Street
Kailua, Hawaiʻi 96734-4498
P (808) 263-5500
F (808)-263-5143
www.
AdventistHealthCastle.org

March 31, 2025

Honolulu City Council
530 S King St
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Letter of Recommendation for Jim Ireland as Director of Emergency Services

Dear Honorable Members of the Honolulu City Council,

It is my honor to write this letter in support of Jim Ireland's candidacy for the position of Director of Emergency Services for the City and County of Honolulu. While I have only been part of this community for a short time I have been impressed with Jim's far-reaching knowledge and commitment to finding solutions. I have seen his exceptional leadership, unwavering dedication, and extensive expertise in emergency medical services.

Jim Ireland is a highly respected professional with a proven track record of excellence in emergency management. His extensive experience in leading emergency medical services, combined with his ability to make critical decisions under pressure, makes him an outstanding candidate for this position. His background demonstrates a deep understanding of crisis management, emergency preparedness, and public health initiatives, all of which are crucial for effectively overseeing emergency services in our community.

Beyond his professional qualifications, Jim is a compassionate leader who prioritizes the well-being of the residents he serves. His ability to collaborate with first responders, healthcare providers, and government agencies ensures that emergency services operate with efficiency and effectiveness. I have appreciated Jim's thoughtfulness specifically for Adventist Health Castle as we are discussing how to best to serve our behavioral health community and get services needed to that population.

I support Jim Ireland's appointment as the Director of Emergency Services and have no doubt that his leadership will continue to enhance emergency preparedness and response in our community. I urge you to give his application your strongest consideration, as he is the great candidate to lead this critical department.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Chase Aalborg
President
Adventist Health Castle

Testimony in Opposition to the Mayor's Nominee as Director of HESD

Testimony of Eddie Fujioka

March 1, 2025

Honorable Members of the Council,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. I stand before you in strong opposition to the mayor's nominee for Dr. Jim Ireland as Director of HESD. After careful consideration and review, I have concluded that this nominee does not represent the best interests of our community.

Firstly, the nominee's background and professional experience do not align with the critical requirements of the position. The role demands a leader with a deep understanding of managing a First Responder system including scheduling and personnel issues, which the nominee has not demonstrated. Moreover, the nominee's track record as Director raises significant concerns about his ability to effectively serve our community.

Secondly, I am deeply troubled by the nominee's stance on processing promotions and interviews and screening. This policy is vital to the welfare of our residents, and the nominee's previous statements and actions indicate a clear misalignment with the values and needs of our community. Appointing someone who does not share our vision for progress and development would be a disservice to the citizens we represent. In Dr' Ireland's previous testimony when questioned on why he was on the interview/selection panel he mentioned he wanted to be sure it was done correctly. Council members as you may be aware there is a standard method to vet the interview process by being present in the room as a "Monitor". The last permanent EMS Chief was present in the room as a monitor Additional previous testimony during the February Safety Committee meeting it was documented Dr. Ireland was on the interview panel. I conducted research on the interview and Dr. Ireland was also the lead interviewer on the panel. He also has a close working relationship with one of the candidates and that candidate was selected to fill the promotion. It appears unethical and Dr. Ireland should not have been on the select panel and allowed to score and be the lead interviewer. It displays not only a critical error in judgement but the appearance of favoritism.

Lastly, transparency and accountability are cornerstone values that we must uphold in our local government. The nominee's history of lack of transparency or accountability casts doubt on his commitment to these principles. Our community deserves leaders who are not only qualified but also exemplify the highest standards of integrity and transparency.

The following data was not mentioned to this body during the last 4 yrs under Dr. Ireland's leadership.

Two ALS units were taken permanently out of service

Kokua was a surge unit at Kuakini Hospital that was fully equipped with rent free office space and supply storage space courtesy of Kuakini Hospital

Waikele was opened by Dr. Ireland and after a few months was closed due to lack of staffing and shortages of spare Ambulances. The unit is still listed on the EMS website

Record breaking unit closures. In previous years closures were uncommon

Record retirements in 2024 of Paramedics. Under Directors Ireland and Santee many clerical staff have left EMS and HESD

Poor or no record keeping on Maintenance on the following:

O2 regulators (portable and on-board systems)

O2 inline hose system in vehicles (wall O2)

CPAP devices

All of the above were systems used in the fatal Kaneohe Ambulance fire that also critically injured a EMS Paramedic

Poor or non-existent records on radio systems. As Communications District Chief, I repeatedly requested inventory and spread data from Administration and the P25 radio systems technician selected by the Directors. All were ignored or were nonproductive in essence was informed it was not my concern. There are little to no data/records on both portable and mobile (vehicle) radios. Key data as date of purchase, date placed into service, who installed and tested the radios, what software versions were used, when the last update was installed and tested, who did the updates, what individuals were assigned radios with serial numbers. Inventory on batteries, spare batteries dates purchased, dates placed into service, last service dates on batteries and radios including chargers (what units, individuals are assigned).

It is important to have this data in the event something was to go wrong with communication especially if there was a "CODE Blue" (Call for immediate HPD assistance) or "May Day".

Record number of stolen Ambulances (3 or 4)

Record number of vehicle fires (3 or 4)

Misuse of EMS division equipment and supplies. I was informed by more than one employee that equipment such as CPAP and EKG equipment valued in thousands of dollars was assigned to the CORE units. EMS supplies have been used to respond to CORE.

Removing the Chief of EMS position. The 2011 City audit recommended extending a career ladder within EMS. Dr. Ireland's removing of this position is counter to the Auditors recommendation and leaves the EMS division rudderless and poor leadership. EMS needs a leader or "parent" to lead the rank and file

No strategic action plan EMS has no plan in place, no 5, 10,15 and beyond plan. No analytical data to support their plans including where, when and why future units should be opened. EMS needs to look at **system status management** of units. This method is cost effective and provides greater mobility and reduced response plans.

Lack of data collection EMS does not utilize any data collection software that assists in reduction in response plans, times, staffing and movement of units. There is systems available in the industry that uses historical data to predict when and where incidents are expected to occur. EMS does not use data for any daily or future planning. The former Chief of operations and I endorse a product, but HESD admin did not support it. The software uses current traffic conditions that factored into recommendations on what units to assign to a call. The current CAD only uses posted speed limits. EMS needs a leader that embraces current technology and not rely on gut or political judgements.

No meaningful progress for Honolulu First Responder Mental Health and Wellness

Last year a Resolution urging City Administration and HESD to develop a program to address first responder mental health and wellness was approved by the Public Safety Committee. No meaningful progress has been done and there is no line item budget for this program. It is sending a message to Police Officers, Fire Fighters, Paramedics, EMT's, Emergency Dispatchers and Ocean Safety personnel that they are not valued. Over the last year Honolulu has had several tragic incidents. Line of duty deaths of a Fire Fighter and Ocean Safety Lifeguard, New Years Fireworks incident, domestic homicide tragedies. Other incidents that occurred two Honolulu Police Officers killed, and homes burnt in Diamond area and Suicides. Sending a peer support group in not enough. Peer support is level 101. We need to do better and value our first responders. It will help them extend their careers and improve mental and overall wellness for themselves and their families. Honolulu is at least a decade behind other major metropolitan agencies. Some extend programs to retirees, offer a few days a year of mental health leave, get screened annually by a licensed professional trained in First Responder Wellness.

Many cities have mandatory screening for their responders. Every conference that has involvement with First Responders have break out sessions on Mental and Wellness and it is an industry standard for all agencies except for Honolulu. Dr Ireland is failing our First Responders

Training deficits

National student to Trainer ratio is 1 – 6. One instructor for every 5 students. Honolulu EMS has one three full-time trainers and one District Chief (Administrator). Dr. Ireland mentioned he just hired 24 EMT's. Therefore, EMS should only have 18 EMT's/Trainees in class. This is to ensure proper training; student safety and educational instruction/protocol is followed. They are in training as first responders, and it is critical that they not only follow proper medical procedures but practices. Hands on training requires adequate attention. For Emergency Vehicle training on a driving course the ratio is 2 to 6. I am sure Police and Fire training academies follow a similar ratio.

Fiscal reports and Cash flow of Ambulance billing collection

Since EMS is billing and collecting fees for service. EMS should be submitting a monthly

statement of cash flow to the City Council and posting the data on their website. These statements should include line items for Collections, other income, outstanding billing, uncollectable, Medicare and other insurance payments included self-payments. Recurring costs such as billing company fees, equipment, postage etc.

They should follow the standard accounting practices and have Year-to-date and prior month YTD totals. BWS has data collection on their website, EMS should also have billing and collection data posted.

I also stand on my previous testimony regarding lack of progress for First Responder Mental Health and Wellness programs for Honolulu First Responders and Dispatchers.

Greatest difference being a Director of EMS and being a doctor

The greatest difference lies in the scope of responsibility and decision making.

A doctor focuses on direct patient care and diagnosing treating medical conditions, mostly in a hospital or clinical setting. The work is within a defined system, following protocols and medical guidelines tailored to individual patients.

A director of EMS oversees the entire emergency medical response system, including policies, staffing, training, resource management. The decisions affect not just individual patients but the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response for the entire community. Doctors prioritize specific treatment while EMS directors ensure that emergency services function optimally for all patients in need. One is hands on in medicine, the other is hands on in logistics, leadership, and strategic planning.

In conclusion, I urge the council to consider the long-term implications of this appointment. We need a nominee who will not only fulfill the requirements of the position but also champion the values that we, as a community, hold dear. I respectfully request that you reject the mayor's nominee and seek a candidate who will truly serve the best interests of our residents. The EMS director should begin focusing on merging with a Fire based EMS system, this is the national tread and standard. Honolulu EMS is only one of two remaining Metropolitan system left in the Nation. It is time to move forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eddie Fujioka

Retired EMS District Chief

Hawaii State 911 Board Finance Committee Chair

Hawaii State DAGS First Responder Memorial Planning group

Testimony in Opposition to the Mayor's Nominee as Director of HESD

Testimony of Eddie Fujioka

March 1, 2025

Honorable Members of the Council,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. I stand before you in strong opposition to the mayor's nominee for Dr. Jim Ireland as Director of HESD. After careful consideration and review, I have concluded that this nominee does not represent the best interests of our community.

Firstly, the nominee's background and professional experience do not align with the critical requirements of the position. The role demands a leader with a deep understanding of managing a First Responder system including scheduling and personnel issues, which the nominee has not demonstrated. Moreover, the nominee's track record as Director raises significant concerns about his ability to effectively serve our community.

Secondly, I am deeply troubled by the nominee's stance on processing promotions and interviews and screening. This policy is vital to the welfare of our residents, and the nominee's previous statements and actions indicate a clear misalignment with the values and needs of our community. Appointing someone who does not share our vision for progress and development would be a disservice to the citizens we represent. In Dr' Ireland's previous testimony when questioned on why he was on the interview/selection panel he mentioned he wanted to be sure it was done correctly. Council members as you may be aware there is a standard method to vet the interview process by being present in the room as a "Monitor". The last permanent EMS Chief was present in the room as a monitor Additional previous testimony during the February Safety Committee meeting it was documented Dr. Ireland was on the interview panel. I conducted research on the interview and Dr. Ireland was also the lead interviewer on the panel. He also has a close working relationship with one of the candidates and that candidate was selected to fill the promotion. It appears unethical and Dr. Ireland should not have been on the select panel and allowed to score and be the lead interviewer. It displays not only a critical error in judgement but the appearance of favoritism.

Lastly, transparency and accountability are cornerstone values that we must uphold in our local government. The nominee's history of lack of transparency or accountability casts doubt on his commitment to these principles. Our community deserves leaders who are not only qualified but also exemplify the highest standards of integrity and transparency.

The following data was not mentioned to this body during the last 4 yrs under Dr. Ireland's leadership.

Two ALS units were taken permanently out of service

Kokua was a surge unit at Kuakini Hospital that was fully equipped with rent free office space and supply storage space courtesy of Kuakini Hospital

Waikele was opened by Dr. Ireland and after a few months was closed due to lack of staffing and shortages of spare Ambulances. The unit is still listed on the EMS website

Record breaking unit closures. In previous years closures were uncommon

Record retirements in 2024 of Paramedics. Under Directors Ireland and Santee many clerical staff have left EMS and HESD

Poor or no record keeping on Maintenance on the following:

O2 regulators (portable and on-board systems)

O2 inline hose system in vehicles (wall O2)

CPAP devices

All of the above were systems used in the fatal Kaneohe Ambulance fire that also critically injured a EMS Paramedic

Poor or non-existent records on radio systems. As Communications District Chief, I repeatedly requested inventory and spread data from Administration and the P25 radio systems technician selected by the Directors. All were ignored or were nonproductive in essence was informed it was not my concern. There are little to no data/records on both portable and mobile (vehicle) radios. Key data as date of purchase, date placed into service, who installed and tested the radios, what software versions were used, when the last update was installed and tested, who did the updates, what individuals were assigned radios with serial numbers. Inventory on batteries, spare batteries dates purchased, dates placed into service, last service dates on batteries and radios including chargers (what units, individuals are assigned).

It is important to have this data in the event something was to go wrong with communication especially if there was a "CODE Blue" (Call for immediate HPD assistance) or "May Day".

Record number of stolen Ambulances (3 or 4)

Record number of vehicle fires (3 or 4)

Misuse of EMS division equipment and supplies. I was informed by more than one employee that equipment such as CPAP and EKG equipment valued in thousands of dollars was assigned to the CORE units. EMS supplies have been used to respond to CORE.

Removing the Chief of EMS position. The 2011 City audit recommended extending a career ladder within EMS. Dr. Ireland's removing of this position is counter to the Auditors recommendation and leaves the EMS division rudderless and poor leadership. EMS needs a leader or "parent" to lead the rank and file

No strategic action plan EMS has no plan in place, no 5, 10,15 and beyond plan. No analytical data to support their plans including where, when and why future units should be opened. EMS needs to look at **system status management** of units. This method is cost effective and provides greater mobility and reduced response plans.

Lack of data collection EMS does not utilize any data collection software that assists in reduction in response plans, times, staffing and movement of units. There is systems available in the industry that uses historical data to predict when and where incidents are expected to occur. EMS does not use data for any daily or future planning. The former Chief of operations and I endorse a product, but HESD admin did not support it. The software uses current traffic conditions that factored into recommendations on what units to assign to a call. The current CAD only uses posted speed limits. EMS needs a leader that embraces current technology and not rely on gut or political judgements.

No meaningful progress for Honolulu First Responder Mental Health and Wellness

Last year a Resolution urging City Administration and HESD to develop a program to address first responder mental health and wellness was approved by the Public Safety Committee. No meaningful progress has been done and there is no line item budget for this program. It is sending a message to Police Officers, Fire Fighters, Paramedics, EMT's, Emergency Dispatchers and Ocean Safety personnel that they are not valued. Over the last year Honolulu has had several tragic incidents. Line of duty deaths of a Fire Fighter and Ocean Safety Lifeguard, New Years Fireworks incident, domestic homicide tragedies. Other incidents that occurred two Honolulu Police Officers killed, and homes burnt in Diamond area and Suicides. Sending a peer support group in not enough. Peer support is level 101. We need to do better and value our first responders. It will help them extend their careers and improve mental and overall wellness for themselves and their families. Honolulu is at least a decade behind other major metropolitan agencies. Some extend programs to retirees, offer a few days a year of mental health leave, get screened annually by a licensed professional trained in First Responder Wellness.

Many cities have mandatory screening for their responders. Every conference that has involvement with First Responders have break out sessions on Mental and Wellness and it is an industry standard for all agencies except for Honolulu. Dr Ireland is failing our First Responders

Training deficits

National student to Trainer ratio is 1 – 6. One instructor for every 5 students. Honolulu EMS has one three full-time trainers and one District Chief (Administrator). Dr. Ireland mentioned he just hired 24 EMT's. Therefore, EMS should only have 18 EMT's/Trainees in class. This is to ensure proper training; student safety and educational instruction/protocol is followed. They are in training as first responders, and it is critical that they not only follow proper medical procedures but practices. Hands on training requires adequate attention. For Emergency Vehicle training on a driving course the ratio is 2 to 6. I am sure Police and Fire training academies follow a similar ratio.

Fiscal reports and Cash flow of Ambulance billing collection

Since EMS is billing and collecting fees for service. EMS should be submitting a monthly

statement of cash flow to the City Council and posting the data on their website. These statements should include line items for Collections, other income, outstanding billing, uncollectable, Medicare and other insurance payments included self-payments. Recurring costs such as billing company fees, equipment, postage etc.

They should follow the standard accounting practices and have Year-to-date and prior month YTD totals. BWS has data collection on their website, EMS should also have billing and collection data posted.

I also stand on my previous testimony regarding lack of progress for First Responder Mental Health and Wellness programs for Honolulu First Responders and Dispatchers.

Greatest difference being a Director of EMS and being a doctor

The greatest difference lies in the scope of responsibility and decision making.

A doctor focuses on direct patient care and diagnosing treating medical conditions, mostly in a hospital or clinical setting. The work is within a defined system, following protocols and medical guidelines tailored to individual patients.

A director of EMS oversees the entire emergency medical response system, including policies, staffing, training, resource management. The decisions affect not just individual patients but the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response for the entire community. Doctors prioritize specific treatment while EMS directors ensure that emergency services function optimally for all patients in need. One is hands on in medicine, the other is hands on in logistics, leadership, and strategic planning.

In conclusion, I urge the council to consider the long-term implications of this appointment. We need a nominee who will not only fulfill the requirements of the position but also champion the values that we, as a community, hold dear. I respectfully request that you reject the mayor's nominee and seek a candidate who will truly serve the best interests of our residents. The EMS director should begin focusing on merging with a Fire based EMS system, this is the national tread and standard. Honolulu EMS is only one of two remaining Metropolitan system left in the Nation. It is time to move forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eddie Fujioka

Retired EMS District Chief

Hawaii State 911 Board Finance Committee Chair

Hawaii State DAGS First Responder Memorial Planning group

RES25-011

CONFIRMING THE NOMINATION OF JAMES H. E. IRELAND, M.D., TO SERVE AS THE DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

Committee on Public Safety and Customer Service

Dear Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Kiaʻāina, Council Members Nishimoto, Tulba, and Weyer.

Dr. Ireland is a tremendous asset to Honolulu's emergency services. He will continue to move this department forward. I wholeheartedly support this reappointment.

I have had a remarkable 40-year career in Public Safety. This included serving as a first responder, EMT, firefighter, Paramedic, supervisor on several levels, EMS Department Chair, and currently as the Assistant Chief of EMS for Honolulu Emergency Medical Services. I have also had the pleasure of working directly with several Directors, EMS Chiefs, and many other public safety leaders. With this, I am highly qualified to provide you with an informed letter of support for Dr. Ireland as the Director of the Emergency Services Department. I can confidently say that he possesses the experience, leadership, and vision to excel in this vital role.

His impressive track record in emergency medical services further supports my experience. He has consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of clinical care, operational management, and community health needs. His comprehensive administrative and clinical experience in emergency services has made him an invaluable asset to Honolulu Emergency Medical Services (HEMS).

Dr. Ireland's greatest strength has been leading his employees and the operation through well-known, challenging times, many of which he inherited due to the complex funding structure that tied the hands of his previous administration and that of his predecessors. Understanding that the four-decade-long structure was unsustainable, Dr. Ireland worked collaboratively with the State Department of Health, our legislature, the executive branch, the city council, and the mayor's office to move funding from the state to the city.

This change, which took place only a few years ago, enabled HEMS to become much more responsive in tackling the well-known challenges that affected EMS. In a nationwide industry plagued with constant workforce shortages, Dr. Ireland has successfully filled almost every open EMT and MICT position. In an ambulance manufacturing industry that has seen significant production delays due to the impact of COVID-19, we will, in several weeks, receive 14 new ambulances, with six more to follow this summer. In a system where public and private payors have restricted remuneration to the point where many ambulance services nationwide have or will be closing, Dr. Ireland's efforts have a system that essentially funds itself.

He also excels in fostering collaboration between emergency responders, healthcare providers, and community stakeholders to improve patient outcomes and ensure a well-coordinated, efficient care system.

His leadership style is inclusive, motivating, and grounded in a commitment to excellence. He has a remarkable ability to innovate within the emergency services field, constantly seeking ways to improve systems and processes while maintaining the highest standards of care. His strategic thinking and passion for community health make him a highly effective problem solver and a strong advocate for positive change. I have witnessed his tireless work ethic, which is always paired with a compassionate and empathetic approach to his patients, employees, and colleagues.

In addition to his professional qualifications, Dr. Ireland is a person of integrity, dedication, and compassion. His contributions to emergency services have made a tangible difference in the lives of many, and I do not doubt that he will continue to have a profound impact in Honolulu.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Jeff Zuckernick
Assistant Chief of Operations
Honolulu Emergency Medical Services
jzuckernick@honolulu.gov

Ralph S. Goto
44-547 Kaneohe Bay Drive
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Val Okimoto, Chair,
And Members
Committee on Public Safety
Honolulu City Council
Honolulu Hale
530 S. King Street
Honolulu HI 96813

Dear Chair Okimoto and Members:

RE: Resolution 25-011

I am submitting this testimony to support the nomination of Dr. James Ireland as the Director of Emergency Services.

I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Ireland for four years during my tenure as the director of the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division, which at the time, was a division in the Emergency Services Department.

As my immediate supervisor, Dr. Ireland was professional, supportive, and willing to listen to the concerns of the City's lifeguard operation, and to take action to address these concerns.

Some of these actions included improved communication between the Ocean Safety and EMS divisions, increased opportunities for advanced emergency medical training for the lifeguards, and improved outcomes for patients who received pre-hospital care at the scene for beach and ocean emergencies.

Although the City and County lifeguards now have their own department, the relationship between the lifeguards and EMS will continue to be positive, as the

level of improved interaction between first responder personnel initiated by Dr, Ireland

In my opinion, Dr, James Ireland has been a professional, enthusiastic and effective director of the Emergency Services Department. I urge you to support his nomination and allow him to continue his dedicated service to the citizens of the City and County of Honolulu

Sincerely,

Ralph S. Goto

To the Honorable Members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am writing to express my deep disappointment that, despite the overwhelming evidence presented regarding the failures of James Ireland's leadership, the political environment appears poised to allow his reappointment as Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. It is disheartening that facts and firsthand accounts of mismanagement, ethical breaches, and favoritism are being disregarded in favor of personal and political interests.

Many of the individuals publicly supporting his reappointment lack direct experience working under his leadership and therefore cannot speak to the toxic workplace culture he has fostered. It should be alarming to all that there is little to no support for him from the EMTs, paramedics, or even staff from his own medical practice—those who would have the most insight into his management style and decision-making. That absence speaks volumes. The few within the department who are publicly testifying in his favor are the very individuals benefiting directly from his leadership—whether through special assignments, questionable hiring practices, or preferential treatment. Their support is not a reflection of strong leadership but rather a demonstration of how favoritism has created a system where loyalty is rewarded over merit and integrity.

Since the previous hearing, rather than reflecting on the concerns raised and taking steps to address them, James Ireland has doubled down on his irresponsible management. Instead of engaging with frontline EMS workers and giving them an opportunity to voice their concerns, he has focused on superficial changes, such as testing new uniforms—an initiative that does nothing to resolve the real issues affecting department morale and operations. Notably, there was no mention of uniform replacements in his budget presentation, raising questions about his priorities and financial planning. Additionally, with a task force now exploring a potential merger between HFD and EMS, spending taxpayer dollars on new uniforms seems particularly wasteful. If a merger is recommended, the city could end up spending twice—once to outfit EMS employees and again to transition them into HFD-issued gear.

As if these misplaced priorities weren't enough, he has also hired a contract employee to assist the Assistant Chief of Operations Jeff Zuckernick—a position that has never been warranted in the past. This Assistant Chief, notably, continues to moonlight as a full-time employee at a private ambulance company on Kauai every weekend, and his newly appointed assistant is a recently retired member of that very same private ambulance company. Instead of directing funding toward critical needs such as equipment, supplies, or field operations, he is diverting resources to personal pet projects and creating unnecessary positions for his inner circle. Can the department and the public expect even more city EMS contracts to be funneled to this private ambulance company now that ethical boundaries continue to be so blatantly disregarded?

Equally troubling is the refusal of some council members to engage with their constituents on this matter. Many who reached out with genuine concerns were ignored, suggesting that political ideology and personal alliances are being prioritized over the well-being of our first responders

and the safety of our community. This lack of accountability from our elected officials only serves to erode public trust.

James Ireland's tenure has been marked by conflicts of interest, unethical leadership, and policies that have actively harmed EMS operations. The staffing shortages, low morale, and operational failures that have resulted under his leadership are undeniable. Yet, rather than addressing these critical issues, he has been allowed to manipulate narratives, divert resources to pet projects, and promote personal allies at the expense of department integrity.

The reappointment of James Ireland sends a clear and troubling message: that those in power can operate without accountability, that the voices of those on the front lines are secondary to political convenience, and that the decline of a critical public safety service is an acceptable cost.

I urge the Council to reconsider this decision and stand for leadership that prioritizes ethics, fairness, and public safety over personal and political gain.

Sincerely,

Koa

To the Honolulu City Council,

I’m writing to say I strongly oppose bringing James Ireland back as EMS Director. His leadership has hurt morale, driven people out, and made things worse for those actually working in EMS. It’s frustrating to see politics winning over real concerns.

The people speaking in favor of him either don’t work for him or are the ones getting special treatment. Meanwhile, the EMTs and paramedics—the ones dealing with his decisions daily—aren’t speaking up because they know it won’t matter or they’re afraid of backlash. That should tell you something.

He’s also created a pointless new job to assist the Assistant Chief of Operations Jeff Zuckernick, a role that never needed extra help before. Zuckernick already works full-time on another island on weekends, and now his new assistant just happens to be a retired employee from the same private ambulance company. Notice how Zuckernick was a public testifier, submitting testimony during work time with his work email.

James Ireland has made things worse, not better. Reappointing him would just be rewarding bad leadership and bad decisions. Honolulu needs someone who will actually support EMS workers and put public safety first.

Respectfully,

Moku

HAWAIʻI LODGING & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY OF MUFI HANNEMANN
President & CEO, Hawaiʻi Lodging & Tourism Association

Honolulu City Council, Committee on Public Safety and Customer Services
RE: Resolution 25-11 – Relating to the Reappointment of Dr. James Ireland
as Director of the Department of Emergency Services

April 3, 2024

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Kiaʻāina, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Hawaiʻi Lodging & Tourism association, the states oldest private-sector visitor industry organization, I respectfully submit our strong support for Resolution 25-11 and the reappointment of Dr. James Ireland as the Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department.

We testified in support of Dr. Ireland's appointment in 2021, and our support remains steadfast. As we shared then, Dr. Ireland is an exceptional physician and public health administrator with a wide breadth of experience. In 2010, I had the privilege of appointing Dr. Ireland to this very role during my time as Mayor of Honolulu. From day one, he brought steady leadership, professionalism, and a deep commitment to public service.

Since returning to the position in 2021, Dr. Ireland has led the department through some of the most challenging periods in recent memory. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he played a crucial role in coordinating emergency response efforts and protecting public health. HLTA worked closely with him throughout the early days of the crisis, and we saw firsthand his calm, measured, and collaborative approach.

More recently, he launched the Community Outreach Response and Engagement (C.O.R.E.) program, which delivers medical services directly to individuals experiencing homelessness in high-need areas such as Downtown, Chinatown, and Waikīkī. This initiative reflects a practical and compassionate solution to addressing public health issues while easing the burden on our emergency response systems.

Dr. Ireland has also taken decisive steps to build capacity within the department. He has spearheaded the creation of an EMS Academy to train and certify new emergency medical technicians. He also facilitated the hiring of 20 EMT graduates from Kapiʻolani Community College to help address critical workforce shortages.

While no public servant is without challenges, Dr. Ireland has consistently shown a willingness to engage in dialogue, address concerns, and evolve his leadership to meet the needs of our community. His deep experience, proven dedication, and forward-thinking vision make him the right person to continue leading the Department of Emergency Services.

We respectfully urge this committee to recommend approval of Resolution 25-11 and support the reappointment of Dr. James Ireland by Mayor Blangiardi. His continued leadership will help ensure the safety, health, and well-being of Oʻahu's residents and visitors alike.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support.