

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 503

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirtieth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2020
State of Hawaii
Sir:

Your Committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 503, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

G.M. No. 503

Rona M. Suzuki,
for a term to expire 12-05-2022,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Rona M. Suzuki for service as Director of Taxation.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Rona M. Suzuki from the Department of Public Safety, Hawaii State Energy Office, and numerous individuals.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to the nomination for the appointment of Rona M. Suzuki from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; and one individual.

Your Committee finds that Ms. Suzuki currently serves as the Interim Director of Taxation. She previously served as a senior executive assistant at the Department of Taxation. Ms. Suzuki has also served as executive director of the Office of Community Services, an agency administratively attached to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations that administers grants for programs that assist low-income individuals and families, refugees, and immigrants in the State. Additionally, Ms. Suzuki has more than a decade of private sector experience in the technology industry. Ms. Suzuki obtained her Bachelor of Arts Degree in economics and government from Claremont McKenna College, and she earned a Master of Business Administration Degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Your Committee finds that the Department of Taxation is tasked with administering and enforcing the tax laws of the State. Your Committee notes that certain testifiers raised concerns regarding Ms. Suzuki's very limited knowledge of and experience with the State's tax laws.

After reviewing the background, experience, and qualifications of Ms. Suzuki, a motion was made by the Vice Chairperson of your Committee on Ways and Means to advise and consent to Ms. Suzuki's nomination for appointment as the Director of Taxation. Upon taking the vote, five members of your Committee voted for the motion to advise and consent, one member voted for the motion with reservations, and six members voted against the motion. Therefore, the motion to advise and consent was not adopted. Nevertheless, the nomination will move to the Senate floor for a final vote pursuant to Senate Rule 37.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Ways and Means that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, lacks a majority of votes to recommend that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination and returns the nomination to the full Senate for consideration in accordance with Senate Rule 37(5), which states: "The final question on appointments made by the Governor which require the confirmation or consent of the Senate shall be: "Will the Senate confirm (or consent) to this appointment?"

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, Chair