

Thomas L. Joaquin Senior Vice President of Operations Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.

Statement of
Thomas L. Joaquin
Senior Vice President of Operations
Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.
Before the
Committee on Veteran's Affairs

Tuesday, August 21, 2007

Mr. Chairman and Members of the committee, mahalo for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss VA care in Hawaii. While I am here today to praise the VA, most of my involvement over the last 43 years had been adversarial.

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your steadfast commitment to our veterans. Legislation that you and others have introduced has led to unprecedented care for veterans. From humble beginnings on Ward Avenue in the 1960s to world class medical facilities today, not only on Oahu, but serving all of the neighbor islands with community based outpatient clients (CBOCs).

Recently, an Accreditation audit found our facilities on Oahu to be one of the best in the VA. I can attest to the level of care and concern of my VA doctor and her staff. I can assure you that it rivals my civilian experience.

Many of these accomplishments have come about under the capable leadership of Dr. James Hastings, the Director of the Pacific Islands Health Care System. I belong to an advisory board that meet with Dr. Hastings and his leadership staff quite often. We have a very healthy exchange of concerns and ideas, all designed to allow input into the local VA and subsequent buy in from the constituents we serve. I suggest that the VA consider these advisory boards elsewhere.

I live in Kapolei, the fastest growing area of Oahu; quickly living up to the expectations of the Second City of Oahu. I understand that we are looking to establish a CBOC in this area and are awaiting availability of facilities closed by the Navy.

I would encourage a more aggressive approach, perhaps working with the State or even just building or leasing a facility. The population of the area surrounding Kapolei exceeds any of the neighbor islands.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you again for the opportunity to testify at this hearing. I would be happy to take any questions you might have.