

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

HONOLULU

May 2, 2006

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIONS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 173

Honorable Members
Twenty-Third Legislature
State of Hawaii

Pursuant to Section 16 of Article III of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii, I am returning herewith, without my approval, House Bill No. 173, entitled "A Bill for an Act Relating to the National Guard."

This bill would require that persons appointed in the future to be the Adjutant General possess at least five years of service as an active commissioned officer in the Hawaii National Guard.

This bill is objectionable because it severely restricts a Governor from selecting and appointing the best military leader from all branches of the military services to serve in this significant position. The importance of the position of Adjutant General is critical to the safety and protection of the public. Limiting the ability of the Governor to select the best and brightest for this cabinet level position is short-sighted and gravely misguided.

The best candidate for Adjutant General may very well be a candidate who is not a member of the National Guard. This is especially true as the United States Department of Defense moves to increase cooperation between branches of the military and require close coordination in response to national defense and natural disasters. This bill would reject the logic that any candidate outside of the Guard could do an outstanding job as commanding general of the Hawaii National Guard.

The Adjutant General not only serves as the executive head of the Department of Defense and commanding general of the Hawaii National Guard, but also fulfills two other crucial roles

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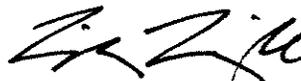
not directly related to experience in the National Guard.

First, the Adjutant General serves as Director of State Civil Defense, with responsibilities covering homeland security, emergency preparedness, crisis management, and disaster cleanup. The Adjutant General is required to coordinate not only those activities involving the National Guard, but all civil defense or emergency management activities with private, county, state, and federal agencies and military branches. Second, the Adjutant General works with the Office of Veterans Services to assist and support our veterans of all of the armed services in the State of Hawaii. A requirement that the Adjutant General have served no less than five years in the Hawaii National Guard is not a clear and convincing criteria for being able to handle a broad scope of duties the Adjutant General role requires.

The qualifications and appointment as codified in Section 121-7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, have stood the test of time and should not be changed. Other than limiting the appointing power of the Governor, this bill serves no legitimate purpose in protecting the people of Hawaii. The State of Hawaii must not limit itself when it comes to ensuring the security and safety of our people, supporting our veterans, and working collaboratively with all branches of the military.

For the foregoing reasons, I am returning House Bill No. 173 without my approval.

Respectfully,



LINDA LINGLE
Governor of Hawaii