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From: Susan A [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 7:30 AM
To: House Judiciary; Senate Judiciary
Subject: Opposition to the Appointment of Leitoni Matakaiongo Tupou to the Alaska Board of Parole

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Subject: Opposition to the Appointment of Leitoni Matakaiongo Tupou to the Alaska Board of Parole

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the appointment of Mr. Leitoni Matakaiongo Tupou to the Alaska Board of Parole. Recent statements and actions attributed to Mr. Tupou suggest a concerning lack of impartiality, particularly regarding issues of racial bias, which I believe disqualify him from serving on the Board.

During the Alaska Parole Board's annual public meeting held on November 8, 2024, Mr. Tupou, serving as Board Chair, responded to concerns about racial disparities in parole decisions by stating that the Board is "color-blind" and does not consider race in its decision-making processes. This assertion is deeply troubling, especially in light of evidence indicating that Alaska Native and Black applicants are disproportionately denied parole. Such a stance not only dismisses the lived experiences of these communities but also overlooks the potential for implicit biases that can influence decision-making. Furthermore, when questioned about the Board's commitment to anti-racism and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training, Mr. Tupou and other Board members reportedly deflected, providing no clear commitment to engage in such educational opportunities .

Alaska Statutes § 33.16.030 emphasize that Board members should be appointed based on their qualifications to make decisions that serve the welfare of both the community and individual offenders. Specifically, the statute requires members to have the ability to consider the character and background of offenders and the circumstances under which offenses were committed. Additionally, at least one member must have experience in the field of criminal justice .

Mr. Tupou's apparent dismissal of concerns regarding racial disparities and his lack of engagement with DEI training raise serious questions about his qualifications to impartially assess offenders' backgrounds and circumstances. His stance suggests a potential disconnect from contemporary understandings of systemic bias and cultural competency, which are essential for fair and just decision-making in parole considerations.

Given these concerns, I respectfully urge you to reconsider Mr. Tupou's appointment to the Alaska Board of Parole. It is imperative that Board members not only possess relevant experience but also demonstrate a commitment to understanding and addressing the complex social factors that influence criminal justice outcomes.

Whether are not you want to address the real world problems they still exist. Your utopian lifestyle does not exist no matter how hard to try to harden your heart.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Susan Allmeroth

Two Rivers

Myself

References

American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska. (2024, November 8). Parole Board annual meeting sets stage for a legislative fix. ACLU of Alaska.

Alaska Statutes § 33.16.030. (2023). Selection criteria for board members. Justia.