

JAN 25 2006

S.B. NO. 3010

A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR COMMUNITY PLACEMENT PROGRAMS FOR
FEMALE OFFENDERS TRANSITIONING FROM PRISON TO THE
COMMUNITY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that, given the problems
2 associated with re-entry, as well as the high rate of
3 recidivism, of the former inmate population, programs that
4 effectively assist the transition of former inmates from prison
5 to the community are critical. Once released from prison, a
6 former inmate faces such issues as housing restrictions,
7 workplace restrictions, as well as the many informal
8 restrictions as a result of prejudice against former offenders.

9 The legislature further finds that the costs of
10 incarceration can be dramatically reduced through the
11 implementation of programs to assist these individuals'
12 integration into the community.

13 In recent years, the number of incarcerated women has
14 increased at an alarming rate. Nationally, women comprise
15 between six and seven percent of the total prison population.
16 In Hawaii, however, women make up twelve percent of the prison
17 population, nearly double the national average. The female



1 population mainly consists of nonviolent first-time drug
2 offenders.

3 Research indicates that a multitude of differing issues are
4 associated with female versus male offenders. Women have
5 different pathways to prison, which often involve unresolved
6 sexual or physical trauma, or substance abuse to self-medicate.
7 In a majority of cases, female offenders are non-violent and do
8 not pose a threat to the community. For female offenders who
9 are incarcerated due to a drug addiction, incarceration is not
10 an effective method for dealing with the addiction. To break
11 the cycle of substance abuse, crime, and incarceration, the root
12 problem must instead be addressed. Many female offenders will
13 return to prison if their drug and alcohol dependencies are not
14 treated and their recovery is not supported during their
15 transition from prison to the community. Currently, there is a
16 lack of adequate programs or access to programs that can assist
17 female offenders in successfully transitioning back into the
18 community. The great majority of women inmates will be released
19 into the community in need of skills and tools for successful
20 transition.

21 The danger of female offenders becoming repeat offenders
22 due to substance abuse presents huge economic and social costs



1 to the public and the social service systems that are already
2 grossly overtaxed. The majority of incarcerated female
3 offenders are mothers of minor children under the age of
4 eighteen and problems stemming from breaking up the family often
5 become intergenerational.

6 Transitional programs that help women coming out of prison
7 to successfully reintegrate into the community have met with
8 great success. TJ Mahoney & Associates offers a transitional
9 program for female offenders re-entering the community.
10 Community-based reintegration programs provide structure,
11 monitoring, and accountability for female offenders returning to
12 the community. They offer tools and a setting for practicing
13 pro-social, responsible living, while instilling values and
14 beliefs that allow women to overcome obstacles while remaining
15 clean and sober. The need to provide adequate services to reach
16 more female offenders is crucial.

17 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to support
18 community placement services, a key component of the re-entry
19 process. Community placement is the final phase of transitional
20 programming, in which women move from the highly structured
21 living environment of a residential program such as TJ Mahoney,
22 to living independently in the community while continuing to be



1 supported and monitored by program staff. Community placement
 2 helps female offenders adjust to greater independence as they
 3 transition from more to less structure, resulting in a more
 4 integrated, seamless re-socialization and re-entry process.

5 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
 6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$146,000, or so much
 7 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2006-2007, for a
 8 grant to TJ Mahoney & Associates, for community placement
 9 programs that provide support services and assistance to female
 10 offenders transitioning from prison to the community.

11 SECTION 3. The sum appropriated shall be expended by
 12 department of public safety for the purposes of this Act.

13 SECTION 4. This Act shall take affect on July 1, 2006.
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SB. NO. 3010

Report Title:

Community Placement for Female Offenders; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for community placement programs for female offenders transitioning from prison back into the community.

