

JAN 19 2007

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO INMATE REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that, given the problems
2 associated with reentry and the high rate of recidivism among
3 the former inmate population, programs that effectively assist
4 the transition of former inmates from prison to the community
5 promote public safety. Upon release from prison, formerly
6 incarcerated persons face institutional barriers to reentry such
7 as housing and workplace restrictions, as well as the challenges
8 of reconnecting with families and maintaining sobriety.

9 Research shows that returning prisoners who have access to
10 key supports and services on release commit fewer crimes,
11 maintain employment, and show improved outcomes for health,
12 income, and a broad range of other indicators. Conversely,
13 former prisoners lacking in support and services are more likely
14 to continue to commit crimes.

15 In Hawaii, the legislature further finds that a person's
16 stay in a jail or prison costs the public \$70 to \$400 per day,
17 depending upon the level of security measures involved.



1 These costs can be dramatically reduced through the
2 implementation of programs that provide comprehensive training
3 and support services for individuals while incarcerated, and
4 continuing upon their release into the community. For example,
5 Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc., administers the BEST (Being
6 Empowered and Safe Together) Reintegration Program in
7 collaboration with the department of public safety and receives
8 federal funds for the "Going Home" pilot program, which is
9 designed to serve individuals who are preparing to return to the
10 Maui community after incarceration.

11 Under the federal grant requirements, BEST serves
12 individuals between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five
13 convicted of class A and B felonies and have been sentenced to a
14 minimum of one year or more of incarceration. The BEST Program
15 provides intensive case management, training, and support
16 services in the areas of employment, housing, cognitive skills
17 restructuring, culture, family reunification, mentoring, and
18 referrals for substance abuse, mental health, and counseling
19 services.

20 In August 2006, Dr. Marilyn Brown issued A Report on
21 Program Implementation and Preliminary Outcomes for the BEST
22 Program. Of the sixty-one BEST clients who have spent time in



1 the community, only nine have been returned to custody as of
2 March 31, 2006. This translates to a recidivism rate of
3 approximately fifteen per cent. In contrast, a 2002 Bureau of
4 Justice Statistics report entitled *Recidivism of Prisoners*
5 *Released in 1994*, indicates that approximately sixty-seven per
6 cent of all prisoners released in 1994 were rearrested within
7 three years of release.

8 Community reintegration programs provide individuals with
9 new tools and support services while instilling values and
10 beliefs that empower them to overcome obstacles and become
11 contributing members of the community.

12 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to support
13 organizations that provide comprehensive training and support
14 services for inmates and formerly incarcerated persons to assist
15 them in their successful reintegration into the community.
16 These programs will help to reduce recidivism rates and increase
17 public safety in the community.

18 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$, or so
20 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008, and
21 the same sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
22 year 2008-2009, as a grant pursuant to 42F, Hawaii Revised



1 Statutes, to Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc., for the
2 development and maintenance of inmate reintegration programs.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
4 of public safety for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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Report Title:

Public Safety; Inmate Reintegration Programs; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for a grant to Maui Economic Opportunities, Inc., for the administration of community-based reintegration programs to reduce the return of former inmates to prison by providing training and support services for successful transitions into the community.

