



the
**Drug Policy
Forum**
of hawaii' **LATE TESTIMONY**

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January 31, 2008

To: Representative Cindy Evans, Chair
Representative Sharon Har, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee on Public Safety & Military Affairs

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta
Executive Director

Re: HB2148 Relating to the Auditor
Hearing: Thursday, January 31, 2008, 8:30 a.m., Room 309

Position: Strong Support

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii supports this measure which would require the legislative auditor to conduct performance audits of private prisons on the mainland that hold Hawaii prisoners.

The contracts with private prisons are some of the most expensive contracts that the state enters into. These contracts also involve persons whose care is entrusted to the State of Hawaii. It is because of this important responsibility that an independent audit of private prisons is necessary. The Department of Public Safety has not provided public access to monitoring reports.

Private prisons have different objectives than those run by government entities. They are for-profit operations; whose goal is to keep as many beds occupied as possible while keeping expenses low. There have been numerous problems at the prisons; sometimes with questions as to implementation of programs that are required under the contracts. Is the department enforcing the terms of the contract? An independent auditor will be able to answer that question for the public. Are we getting what we pay for? We'd like to know.

Please pass this bill so that we can know whether the contractors are complying with the terms of their contract. They must be held accountable.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.