

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY**  
**Rep. Cindy Evans, Chair**  
**Rep. Sharon Har, Vice Chair**  
**Thursday, January 31, 2008**  
**Room 309 at 8:30am**

**LATE TESTIMONY**

**SUPPORT: HB 2608 RELATING TO PRISONS  
FORENSIC TREATMENT FACILITIES**

Aloha Chair Evans, Vice Chair Har and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carrie Ann Shirota, and I am writing in support of HB 2608. My experiences as a former Public Defender and Civil Rights Enforcement Attorney, current staff member of a reentry program on Maui and member of Community Alliance on Prisons have shaped my advocacy efforts to promote accountability and transparency within our correctional system, and improving how individuals are prepared in prison for release as law-abiding, contributing members of their `ohana and community.

I support this bill for many reasons, but would like to highlight just two. First, our correctional system is not meeting the treatment needs of incarcerated persons with mental health conditions as evidenced by the Department of Justice's Report in 2006.

Second, confining mentally ill prisoners in solitary confinement is inhumane and contrary to evidence based practices. Such confinement tends to exacerbate an individual's mental health condition.

Criminal justice professionals have a moral obligation and responsibility to ensure that the conditions and programs offered to incarcerated persons do not make things worse and in fact, result in improved life chances and a safer community. Just as doctors take an oath to do no harm, criminal justice professionals should do the same when working with the incarcerated population, especially those with mental health needs.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2608.

Sincerely,  
Carrie Ann Shirota, Esq.  
Kahului, Hawai'i  
[cashiota@aol.com](mailto:cashiota@aol.com)  
(808) 269-3858