



LATE TESTIMONY

SB 2082 RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY
Senate Committee on Public Safety

January 29, 2008
Conference Room 225

2:45 p.m.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs supports SB 2082. Our interest in this legislation is primarily based on our concern that 45% of women incarcerated in both in-state and out-of-state correctional facilities are Native Hawaiian.

OHA support for this bill is primarily based on growing evidence that children whose parents are incarcerated are more apt to encounter socialization problems in school and the community and exhibit deviant behavior as they grow older.

In the case of women offenders who are incarcerated in mainland correctional facilities, loss of regular contact with their children makes it very difficult for them to reconnect and reintegrate with their children and families once they are released.

With that said, however, we strongly recommend that in developing a plan to return all female offenders to Hawaii by 2009, the State include reentry and reintegration programs for these women that will increase their chances of successfully transitioning back to their families and communities. OHA has heard from several sources, including offenders themselves, that opportunities for program services are more available in mainland correctional facilities than in Hawaii, and as such, they would prefer to stay in the mainland facilities. We need to ensure that these services are accessible to our Hawaii women offenders when they are returned home.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to present testimony. We will be happy to answer any questions.



the
**Drug Policy
Forum**
of hawaii

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P.O. Box 61233
Honolulu, HI 96839

Phone: (808)-988-4386
Fax: (808) 373-7064

Email: info@dpfhi.org
Website: www.dpfhi.org

January 29, 2008

To: Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senator Clarence Nishihara, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee on Public Safety

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta
Executive Director

Re: SB2082 Relating to Public Safety
Hearing: Tuesday, January 29, 2008, 2:45 p.m., Room 225

Position: Support

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii supports this measure which would provide funds for the Department of Public Safety to develop a plan to return all female Hawaii prisoners currently in mainland prisons back to Hawaii by July 1, 2009.

The vast majority of women are convicted for non-violent drug or drug-related offenses. We believe that their needs would be better served by community-based treatment programs rather than incarceration. Community-based programs are less expensive than incarceration and provide an opportunity for offenders to address their pathways to crime and drug use.

This plan will help establish much needed community beds for treatment; will help reduce recidivism; and will facilitate and improve family relationships. There are many unintended consequences of mainland incarceration. Please end those harmful consequences by requiring the Department of Public Safety to return the women to Hawaii.

Please support this important measure.

LATE TESTIMONY

Jenna Davis
1939 Dole St.
Honolulu, Hawaii, 96822
January 29, 2008

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY
Sen. Will Espero, Chair
Sen. Clarence Nishihara, vice chair
Tuesday, January 29, 2008
2:45 PM
Room 225
SUPPORT – Bill SB 2082
Relating to Public Safety

My fiancé is incarcerated in one of these private facilities. I strongly support this Bill, and hope we can start bringing the men home next.