



**Maui Economic
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BEST Reintegration Program
**Being Empowered
and Safe Together**



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Chair
Sen. Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair
Friday, February 22, 2008
11:00 AM at Room 211

Re: SB 2082 SD1 - Relating to Public Safety (Return the Women Home)

Aloha Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ken E.K. Hunt and I am the Program Director of Maui Economic Opportunity's Being Empowered and Safe Together (BEST) Reintegration Program. Over the past five years, BEST has demonstrated that providing comprehensive training and support services to individuals during their incarceration and upon their release into the community is critical to successful reentry.

Typically, BEST clients are enrolled into our program six months to one year prior to release into the community. However, in a handful of cases, we have worked with individuals for more than a year prior to release, as well as individuals referred to us after they were released. A critical component of our reintegration efforts is family reunification and strengthening through training and hands-on activities. Based on our observations, clients are more successful in their transition from prison into the community the earlier we begin to work with them. Indeed, research on best practices dictates that reentry planning should begin on the day an individual enters prison or reports to community supervision following a jail sentence.

We believe that the Department of Public Safety working in partnership with community agencies like BEST can find viable options to return the women back home and closer to their communities and families while providing safe housing, treatment, counseling and support services to address factors that contributed to their criminal offenses. Women who have been transferred to prisons on the north American continent face tremendous challenges when returning home – because of the distance and disconnect with their 'ohana and children. The proposed measure would allow programs like BEST to work with each individual, build healthy sources of support with family, friends and sponsors, provide gender responsive services and use community resources to help. We are here to offer our support.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on SB 2082 SD 1.

Sincerely,

Ken E.K. Hunt
BEST Program Director

cc: Sandy Baz, MEO Executive Director



the
**Drug Policy
Forum**
of hawaii

February 22, 2008

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To: Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta
Executive Director

Re: SB2082 SD1 Relating to Public Safety
Hearing: February 22, 2008, 11:00 a.m., Room 211

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 as many 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. These programs also allow more successful transitions back into the community.

The Justice Policy Institute recently released a briefing paper, "Substance Abuse Treatment and Public Safety." The report finds that community-based treatment programs reduce incarceration rates, reduce incarceration costs, and improve public safety by reducing crime.

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 pass this important measure.

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EPIC, Inc.
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Friends of the Missing Child Center of HI
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Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.
Hawaii Behavioral Health
Hawaii Foster Parent Association
Hawaii Student Television
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition
Hina Mauka Teen Care
Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health
Kama'aina Kids, Inc.
KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project
Kids Behavioral Health
Kids Hurt Too
Life Foundation
Marimed Foundation
The Maui Farm, Inc.
Maui Youth and Family Services
Palama Settlement
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together (PACT)
Planned Parenthood of Hawaii
Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.
Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community Center
Turning Point for Families
Waikiki Health Center
Women Helping Women
World Healing Institute
YWCA of Kauai

February 20, 2008

To: Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair
And members of the Committee on Ways and Means

Testimony in Support of SB 2082 SD1 Relating to Public Safety

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of more than 50 youth serving organizations, supports SB 2082 SD1 Relating to Public Safety

When incarcerated persons and their families are able to maintain strong family bonds, there are substantial benefits to family members (particularly the children), the prisoner, and to the correctional facility administration. It is extremely difficult to sustain family ties when the prisoner is housed thousands of miles away.

Children of incarcerated parents experience grief and loss, similar to the experience of divorce or the death of a parent. Studies show that children of incarcerated parents are at increased risk of abuse or neglect, and more likely to have mental problems, and difficulty in school. Children of incarcerated parents are seven times more likely to enter the juvenile or adult correctional systems themselves. Providing opportunities to sustain the parent-child bond can alleviate many of these problems. Many female prisoners are parents who were the primary caregivers to their children prior to incarceration.

Prisoners who have regular contact with family members benefit as well. They are less likely to violate prison rules and create trouble for prison authorities. They are more likely to take advantage of rehabilitation and educational opportunities while in prison. Regular contact with family members increases the chances of successful reintegration into the community when a person is released from prison.

Hawaii Youth Services Network believes that children and their incarcerated parents would benefit considerably from efforts to keep these parents in Hawaii, rather than incarcerating them in out-of-state facilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Chair

Sen. Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair

Friday, February 22, 2008

11:00 AM

Room 211

STRONG SUPPORT - SB 2082 SD1 - BRINGING OUR WOMEN HOME

Aloha Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative working on prison reform and criminal justice issues in Hawai`i for a decade. I respectfully offer our testimony always being mindful that Hawai`i has more than 6,000 people behind bars with more than 2,000 individuals serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles away from their homes and their loved ones.

SB 2082 SD1 appropriates funds to the department of public safety to develop a plan by July 1, 2008, to return as many as possible of the female Hawaii prisoners incarcerated in mainland prisons back to Hawaii by July 1, 2009.

Community Alliance on Prisons strongly supports this legislation. The recent incident at Otter Creek where the warden's secretary allegedly smuggled a loaded 22 into the prison right past the security checkpoint only increases our concern for the 175 Hawai`i women living there.

Recent data from the Classification study show that more than 52% of the women held in Otter Creek are either minimum or community custody. Most of these women would be better served in community programs that supported their reentry and, where appropriate, reunification with their families was incorporated into the programming. The study data also show that 87% of our women incarcerated abroad are non-violent.

The Classification study consultants also recommended transitioning more individuals who are classified as minimum or community custody into reentry programs is considered best practices in corrections. Traditionally, women have posed little to no risk in community settings and providing support and assistance during this transition is crucial to successful reintegration.

If we do the math, 52% of 175 women = 91 women. 91 women at \$55/day = \$5,005/day; \$150,150/month; \$1,801,800/year. What could we do with that money? We could buy real services to help women transition from prison to the community and reunite with their loved ones to rebuild their lives, restore their families, and help revitalize their communities.

We CAN do this. We can bring our women home AND provide the services they need. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of this great bill! We urge your favorable consideration.

Andy Botts
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February 22, 2008

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Chair

Sen. Shan Tsutsui, vice chair

Friday February 22, 2008

11:00 AM

Room 211

SUPPORT – SB 2082 SD1, Relating to Public Safety

My name is Andy Botts, author of Nightmare In Bangkok. As a third generation local resident, I don't like the idea that over 50 million dollars a year of my investment (tax dollars), is being spent out of state. I strongly support this Bill, as it's the first step in the right direction, and a simple task considering we have less than 200 women in mainland facilities. Hopefully, the next step will be to bring the thousands of men home.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Chair
Sen. Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair
Friday, February 22, 2008
11:00 AM
Room 211

Re: Strong Support of SB 2082 SD 1 Relating to Public Safety
Return Female Prisoners Home

Aloha Chair Baker, Vice-Chair Tsutsui, and Members of the Committee:

As a former Public Defender, member of Community Alliance on Prisons, and as an individual who has had loved ones incarcerated in Hawai'i, I have witnessed firsthand the generational cycle of incarceration in our community. On the other hand, I have also witnessed the transformation and rehabilitation of "hardened criminals" through my work with a reentry program on Maui. For those who turned their lives around, family support was instrumental in contributing to their successful reintegration into the community and becoming productive, law-abiding citizens and responsible family members.

I support SB 2082 because it would require the Department of Public Safety to develop a strategic plan by July 1, 2008, to return all female Hawaii prisoners incarcerated in the continental United States back to Hawaii. Although some individuals are better served by not maintaining contact or returning to a family environment still characterized by substance abuse, criminal behavior and other negative influences that could trigger past behaviors, strong family support is critical to successful reentry into the community. Indeed, research shows that strategies that prepare and build on the strengths of family relationships show great promise in improving outcomes for returning prisoners and their families. *See From Prison to Home, The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Reentry, Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, June 2001.*

Although opponents of this bill may argue that its "cheaper" to house Hawai'i's inmates on the continent, the costs on "paper" tell only half the story. The daily rates charged by CCA to incarcerate women at Otter Creek Correctional Center in Kentucky amounts to \$51.90 per inmate. However, this daily rate does NOT include certain medical expenses, routine transport of inmates to and from Hawaii under special circumstances, inmate wages for work performed during incarceration and video-conferencing via long-distance telephone costs. More important, CCA's rates do NOT include the social costs of separating women from their 'ohana, especially their keiki. Without a doubt, incarceration has a major impact on the entire family. The role that mothers play in the development of their children's lives and the impact of parent-child separation demands that we, as a community, find ways to help families keep in touch during incarceration and upon their release into the community.

I firmly believe that we must reverse the shameful trend in Hawai'i of exporting the highest percentage of prisoners to other states. Upon recognition of the importance of family visitation and connection in reducing recidivism rates, other states enacted policies that facilitated the return of prisoners home. I humbly ask that we have the courage and wisdom to do the same for women in Hawai'i who have made bad choices, but deserve a second chance to rebuild their lives. I also ask that we not punish innocent children by separating them from their incarcerated mothers and effectively denying them visitation opportunities when housed in prisons on the American continent.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit written testimony, and for recognizing the importance of family visitation to rehabilitation and the successful reentry of inmates returning home. Please support SB 2082 SD 1 to permanently our mothers and daughters who are incarcerated – back home to Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Carrie Ann Shirota, Esq.
Kahului, Maui, Hawai'i
(808) 269-3858

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



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No. _____

WRITTEN COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL 2082 SD1
RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY

by
Clayton A. Frank, Director
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair

Friday, February 22, 2008; 11:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

Senator Baker, Senator Tsutsui, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) is providing written comments supporting the intent of Senate Bill 2082 SD1, which requires the department to 1) develop a plan to return as many as possible female prisoners incarcerated on the mainland to Hawaii by January 1, 2009, and 2) return as many as possible female prisoners to Hawaii by July 1, 2009. The Department is currently exploring various options and plans to return some of the female prisoners from the mainland to Hawaii.

However, given the limited number of secure beds and community beds, and the lack of available program space, we have a daunting challenge ahead.

There are several critically important challenges we face in attempting to comply with this and other similar measures, which include, but are not limited to

the lack of current and sustained future funding to return, house, treat, and transition the female prisoners in Hawaii.

Further, the Department lacks the necessary bed space in our Hawaii facilities for a large increase in this segment of the incarcerated population. There is also a lack of community-based housing options for these prisoners. The Department also lacks sufficient facility and community-based program space to accommodate all the female prisoners.

While we have already began discussions and planning sessions with the Warden of the Federal Detention Center (FDC) Honolulu regarding housing, program, treatment, and transitional services options for female prisoners if they were transferred to the FDC, federal restrictions will severely reduce the number of prisoners eligible for transfer to that facility. Some of the restrictions include the offenders' status and length of time remaining on sentence(s). Moreover, the level of medical care needed by some female prisoners exceeds the current capabilities of the FDC.

For example, of the current mainland female prisoner population of 177, 120 (68%) are not eligible for transfer to the FDC due to the level of medical care they require. The remaining 57 (32%) are medically eligible for transfer, but some have longer than 4 years remaining on their sentence(s) and/or until their tentative parole date, which will preclude their transfer to the FDC.

Despite the challenges explained in this written comment, the Department will continue our planning efforts and make every effort to comply with this

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February 22, 2008
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measure. We will also continue to work with the Warden of the FDC and our partners in the community on all available options.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important matter.