


OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Legislative Testimony

LATE TESTIMONY

SB 2546 RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY
Senate Committee on Public Safety

January 29, 2008
Room 225

2:45 P.M.

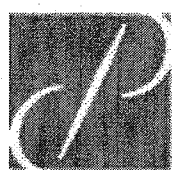
The Office of Hawaiian Affairs supports SB 2546. Our interest in this legislation is primarily based on our concern that approximately 45% of men, women, and juvenile offenders incarcerated in both in-state and out-of-state correctional facilities are Native Hawaiian.

Last session, OHA supported the establishment of the offender reentry program because of the need for more programs, whether they are treatment type, job training and placement, or affordable housing to help ease reintegration and prevent recidivism for both men and women offenders. We believe a comprehensive reentry program and system will substantially reduce the staggering financial and social costs associated with incarceration and recidivism.

SB 2546 provides clarification to the reentry program. OHA supports this measure because it identifies several public and private entities that should assist the Department of Public Safety in carrying out the mandates of the program. We believe this type of collaboration is necessary to make the program a comprehensive one that addresses all the needs of ex-offenders and helps them successfully reintegrate into society.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to present testimony.

LATE TESTIMONY



the
**Drug Policy
Forum**
of hawaii

January 29, 2008

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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: SB 2546 Relating to Offender Reentry
Hearing: Tuesday, January 29, 2008, 2:45 p.m., Room 225

Position: Support with Amendments

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii supports this measure and suggests that amendments be made to strengthen the offender reentry program and to ensure its efficient and effective implementation.

We suggest that the Department of Public Safety be designated as a lead agency for this comprehensive program that requires the participation of several other agencies. We also suggest that all agencies are held accountable for the results of the program.

We also encourage you to require that DPS improve their efforts in keeping families connected by facilitating visitation; by implementing programs that assist grandparents raising children of incarcerated parents; and by providing greater access to data to enable research.

We believe that reentry programs are essential to reduce recidivism and that these programs must be implemented effectively.

Thank you for your past support for reentry programs. We hope you will continue to improve the programs and provide the mechanisms for them to work efficiently.

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LATE TESTIMONY

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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 2546

Relating to Offender Re-entry

I support the mandate that this Bill is a directive, not an option. My only objection to this Bill is in regards to Section 2 (b), "in conjunction with the Hawaii Paroling Authority, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and the Probation and Family court divisions of the judiciary."

The Federal Government recognized the failure of differing agencies with the same responsibilities when it created The Homeland Security Agency. Presently, there's nothing that prevents the Department of Public Safety from reaching out to other agencies for assistance. I'm concerned that if we let them off the hook by distributing their responsibility, then they'll pass the buck later.