



**Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.**  
**B.E.S.T. Reintegration Program**

P.O. Box 2122  
Kahului, HI 96733  
808-249-2990  
Fax: 808-249-2991  
[www.meoinc.org](http://www.meoinc.org)

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & MILITARY AFFAIRS**

Rep. Cindy Evans, Chair  
Rep. Sharon E. Har, Vice Chair  
Thursday, March 13, 2008  
11:00 AM in Room 309

Re: SB 2546, SD2 – Relating to Offender Reentry

Aloha Chair Evans, Vice Chair Har 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.

*We thank the State Legislature for initiating policies to create a Comprehensive Offender Reentry System in Hawai'i. We believe that the mandatory directives of Act 8 will promote a paradigm shift of punishment to rehabilitation and accountability within the Department of Public Safety, and ultimately provide individuals with the training and support to change their lives. In turn, this will reduce recidivism rates and build a safer community.*

**Background Information about BEST**

Since it began in January 2003, BEST has provided comprehensive transitional support services to 130 clients<sup>1</sup> in case management, employment training and assistance, housing assistance, cognitive skills restructuring and cultural renewal training, work clothes, transportation, family reunification, and mentoring services.<sup>2</sup> BEST also contracts with community agencies to provide substance abuse and mental health treatment, GED preparation and other services that help to reduce barriers to successful reentry. Other ways we have been able to help assist BEST clients is by helping them to resolve outstanding traffic matters, obtaining valid drivers' licenses, counseling, and taking responsibility for their child support payments.

---

<sup>1</sup> Under the terms of the SVORI grant, BEST provides comprehensive transitional support services to individuals that meet the following eligibility criteria: 1) Individual is between the ages of 18-35 years old; 2) Individual has been convicted of a Class A or B felony offense; and 3) Individual has been sentenced to a minimum term of one year of incarceration.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to serving clients under the SVORI grant, BEST has helped a larger number of prisoners who are ineligible for program participation under the SVORI criteria. In 2007, we served 100 culture clients and over 130 pre-trial females under the Promoting Reentry Opportunities Through Effective Community Transition ("PROTECT") grant funded by the Hawai'i Community Foundation.

**The Promise of Community Action**

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people



We are committed to working with other sister non-profit agencies in Maui County, to address issues of incarceration. We have held highly successful community forums where community members can voice their opinions about the impact of incarceration on families, on community, and on the human service system. We work closely with Parole Officers, Probation Staff, Maui Intake Services, the Maui Drug Court, and especially the warden and staff at the Maui Community Correctional Center. Without this kind of cooperation and combined support, we would not be able to accomplish all that we do with the limited resources that we have. MEO-BEST staff is dedicated to "Helping People. Changing Lives" of our participants.

***Continuum of Care 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 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. 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. Accordingly, we believe that community based reentry programs will be more effective the earlier they begin to work with an individual prior to release. This is particularly true for individuals that have served lengthy sentences and time in Mainland prisons. The goal is to work with each individual, build healthy sources of support with family, friends and sponsors and utilize resources within the community.

***Reentry Services Are a Wise Investment***

Currently, the State of Hawaii's spends approximately \$37,000 per inmate annually to house and provide minimal programs. The cost of incarceration does not end with the initial amount spent for incarceration. The costs increase when one considers that 51-80 per cent of those being released return to incarceration after committing another crime or violating the terms of probation or parole.

In contrast, BEST spends a range of \$7,000-9,000 per client on an annual basis. As part of the just completed SVORI grant, a third-party evaluation of the BEST Program was conducted by Dr. Marilyn Brown, University of Hawai'i-Hilo. After collecting and analyzing data on participants for two years, preliminary results show that only nine of the sixty-one (61) BEST clients in the community have returned to custody. This amounts to a recidivism rate of 15%. According to PSD, these preliminary results indicate a significant reduction in recidivism rates when compared to released inmates with similar profiles. Her report *The BEST Program: A Report on Program Implementation and Preliminary Outcomes, Executive Summary, Marilyn Brown, Ph.D., August 30, 2006* is available for those wanting to know more. An update to this report shall be available within the next 30 days.

By providing comprehensive transitional support services to inmates who are being released from prison, the State will ultimately save hundreds of thousands of dollars that would otherwise be used to re-house persons convicted of repeat criminal offenses. More important, men and women who receive comprehensive support services will be better prepared to reunify with their families and become law abiding, contributing members of our community.

In short, an investment in a comprehensive reentry system is an investment in public safety. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on SB 2546 SD2.

Sincerely,

Ken E.K. Hunt, Director  
Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. BEST Program

Cc: Sandy K. Baz, MEO Executive Director

## **SB 2546 Relating to Offender Reentry**

*Makes clarifying amendments to chapter 353H, Hawaii Revised Statutes, relating to the offender reentry program. Makes establishing the program mandatory. (SB 2546 SD2)*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Mar. 13, 2008 11:00: AM Conference Room 309

Representative Cindy Evans, Chair

Representative Sharon E. Har, Vice Chair

## **HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION**

GOOD MORNING CHAIR EVANS, VICE CHAIR HAR AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide hui of more than twenty non-profit treatment and prevention agencies.

We applaud the language in SB 2546 to create adult and juvenile offender reentry system plans, which establishes comprehensive programming based on evidenced-based practices for substance abuse and mental health treatment, vocational rehabilitation, transitional living and family reunification practices; gives employers incentives to hire former offenders; returns out-of-state inmates; and provides structured life skills programs, post-release housing, literacy programs, and family support.

We applaud the changes this year to add collaborative processes to include public safety, courts, Judiciary and providers of several different disciplines.

### **HSAC strongly supports SB 2546 with recommendations:**

While there is some limited programming for high risk offenders, there is virtually no programming for moderate risk and merely education programming for low risk offenders. **We propose that risk assessment tools are provided and then respective programs are applied that match that assessed risk.**

We suggest that the language be modified to ensure culturally appropriate, and evidence-based practices.

#### **Recommendations:**

- SECTION 2. (b) (2) Providing appropriate **“evidenced-based practice”** programs, including, but not limited to, education, substance abuse treatment, cognitive skills development, vocational and employment training, and other programs that help to meet the assessed needs of each individual;
- SECTION 2. (b) (3) Developing a comprehensive network of transitional programs **that includes within the network some culturally appropriate programming** to address the needs of individuals exiting the correctional system;

**Summary:**

The primary bottleneck for offenders who are involved in any rehabilitation programming is the small number of reentry slots available in transitional living programs. In addition, existing programs are not sufficient to meet access demands, are fragmented and not all of them fully embrace best practices according to established research. Collaboration, evaluation, and integration as well as expansion of both services and programming are needed to promote effective outcomes.

Given that the offender population has tripled in recent years resulting in overcrowding and exorbitant costs, that up to 80% of offenders have addiction issues, that recidivism is 60% to 80%, that most offenders will be released into the community, and that research demonstrates that treatment and re-integrating systems can achieve up to 60% to 80% success rates, we can no longer afford not to embrace improved systems of rehabilitation.

This plan is in alignment with the plans of other states and is inevitable, given the volumes of research and reputable institutions advocating for it.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information and are available for questions, if needed.

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

76 North King Street, Suite 203, Honolulu, Hawai`i 96817  
Phone/E-mail: (808) 533-3454/communityallianceonprisons@hotmail.com



## COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & MILITARY AFFAIRS

Rep. Cindy Evans, Chair

Rep. Sharon Har, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 13, 2008

11:00 AM

Room 309

### SUPPORT - SB 2546 SD2 - CLARIFYING ACT 8 - COMMUNITY SAFETY ACT OF 2007 - HAWAII'S REENTRY LAW

Aloha Chair Evans, Vice Chair Har 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 being 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 2546 SD2 makes clarifying amendments to chapter 353H, Hawaii Revised Statutes, relating to the offender reentry program. Makes establishing the program mandatory.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports this measure, which emphasizes that Act 8 of 2007 is NOT directive, it is mandatory. Although the language was clear to us, apparently the administration didn't understand that that Act 8 is a law, not a suggestion.

We support developing a comprehensive reentry system because the physical and mental state in which an individual exits incarceration is vital to public safety. We are glad that the legislature has acknowledged that the department of public safety must be the lead agency in the rehabilitation and reentry of individuals exiting incarceration.

Community Alliance on Prisons would also like to note that none of the funding for the Community Safety Act of 2007 has been released at this writing.

This denial of funding (\$1,435,000) for three excellent programs in this law, Act 8

- will not expand or continue the nationally and internationally recognized Restorative Circles project that is currently at Waiawa Correctional Facility and Women's Community Correctional Center - \$202,000 appropriation,
- will force MEO's BEST (Being Empowered and Safe Together) Reintegration Program to cut back the excellent services they provide to individuals reentering the Maui community - \$1,200,000 appropriation, and
- will not provide evidence-based cognitive restructuring to help Hawai`i Island people reentering their communities - \$33,000 appropriation.

A recent informational briefing presented by the department of public safety and their consultants from the Criminal Justice Institute, Camille Camp and Patricia Hardyman, hired to retool our classification system revealed that from a healthy sample of 2400 files from our 6,010 incarcerated population in jail and prison in Hawai'i and in prisons on the U.S. continent, Hawai'i has been over-classifying inmates.

Community Alliance on Prisons has been doing research in this area for several years and we have found much research to support that over-classification of incarcerated individuals actually increases criminality. In other words, it is counter-productive.

The consultants agreed that moving people through the system to lower classifications, where appropriate, was considered best practice in corrections. They confirmed that reentry starts on day one.

Community Alliance on Prisons has been hearing about empty beds at many of our facilities. To date we have been told that there are

- 28 empty beds at the Women's Community Correctional Center
- 60 empty beds at Waiawa Correctional Facility
- 70 empty beds at Maui Correctional Center in Dorms 6 and 7
- 158 empty beds** that we have been told about

We pay Corrections Corporation of America approximately \$55 per day. If we multiply that \$55 per day by the 158 people we could bring home, that would be \$8,690 a day/\$260,700 a month/**\$3,128,400** a year that we could invest in true public safety – assisting those individuals transitioning to the community with the tools and assistance they need in order to successfully come home.

In fact, we could fund these three programs for two years and still have more than \$28 million left!

Another fact revealed by the classification study de-bunked the myth that every incarcerated person is dangerous. Their report showed that the majority of Hawai'i's incarcerated population, and whose files they reviewed, are non-violent. Below are the numbers from their sample.

	<b>Males</b> <b><u>Non-Violent vs. Violent</u></b>	<b>Females</b> <b><u>Non-Violent vs. Violent</u></b>
<b>Jail Sentenced Inmates</b>	<b>64% vs. 36%</b>	<b>85% vs. 15%</b>
<b>Prison Inmates*</b>	<b>62% vs. 38%</b>	<b>83% vs. 17%</b>

\* includes Hawai'i, Contract, and Interstate Compact Prisons

This is all the more reason we should be investing in social capital and helping people who have lost their way, find their place in society. It benefits everyone to reduce our prison population. Helping people rebuild their lives, restore their families, and successfully reenter their communities will only strengthen Hawai'i. The majority of individuals are receptive to help. Let's help them become part of society – after all, they will be coming home. Let's look for the best in people and assist them in reaching their full potential.

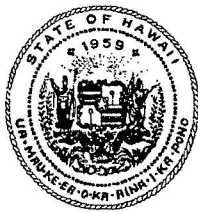
The more than \$50 million a year we export from our economy each year to fatten Corrections Corporation of America's coffers would be the equivalent of \$150 million a year in Hawai'i's economy if one considers the multiplier effect of dollars spent locally, which DBEDT calculates as 3:1.

The department of public safety's annual budget is currently under \$200 million a year. Just think of what having \$50 million more in our economy would mean to us. Could we buy books for students, so they wouldn't have to fight over the limited supply? Could we fund model reintegration programs on three more islands? Could we repair and maintain state facilities? Imagine.

Community Alliance on Prisons urges the legislature to continue pushing for a more effective comprehensive rehabilitation and reentry system. A safe and healthy community is in everyone's best interest and Community Alliance on Prisons is committed to making this happen. We thank you for your leadership.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

CLAYTON A. FRANK  
DIRECTOR

DAVID F. FESTERLING  
Deputy Director  
Administration

TOMMY JOHNSON  
Deputy Director  
Corrections

JAMES L. PROPOTNICK  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2546, SD2  
RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY

by  
Clayton A. Frank, Director  
Department of Public Safety

House Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
Representative Cindy Evans, Chair

Thursday, March 13, 2008, 11:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 309

Representative Evans, Representative Har, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (Department) supports the intent of Senate Bill 2546, SD2 that amends several key sections of Act 8, First Special Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, also known as the Community Safety Act of 2007, and addresses many of the concerns we have expressed to the Legislature. We want to thank the Legislature for their interest in this critically important matter.

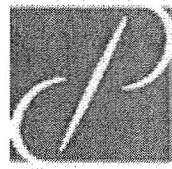
The Department would like to request an amendment on the \$1,820,000 appropriated to the Department for a day reporting center to be reappropriated to the development and implementation of an enhanced offender monitoring and supervision system. We envision this system to be multi-faceted and multi-layered. This will allow for the release of additional inmates, who have been classified as minimum and community custody on extended furlough and possibly parole without jeopardizing the public's safety.

Further, our Department respects the work of the Committee on Public Safety and sees no need for an additional legislative oversight committee to accomplish the tasks of analyzing and evaluating the Department's performance. At present, there exists the House Committee on Public Safety as well as your Committee, which



together can perform the role of the oversight committee formed by Act 8. It should also be noted that the Corrections Population Management Commission (CPMC) was established in 1993 under the provisions of Chapter 353F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and is responsible for 1) establishing maximum inmate population limits for each correctional facility and 2) formulating policies and procedures to prevent the inmate population from exceeding the capacity of each correctional facility.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.



the  
**Drug Policy  
Forum**  
of hawaii

March 13, 2008

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

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta  
Executive Director

Re: SB 2546 SD2 Relating to Offender Reentry  
Hearing: March 13, 2008, 11:00 a.m., Room 309

Position: Support

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii supports this measure which establishes a mandatory comprehensive reentry system.

The Justice Policy Institute recently released a briefing paper, "Substance Abuse Treatment and Public Safety." It found that community-based treatment programs help reduce incarceration rates, help reduce incarceration costs, and improve public safety by reducing crime; and these programs help offenders successfully transition from the criminal justice system back into the community.

Similarly, 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, provide funding for them, provide the mechanisms for them to work efficiently, and ensure that the various state agencies work together and are held accountable for the implementation of the programs.

We urge you to pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Board of Directors**

Pamela Lichty, M.P.H.  
*President*

Kat Brady  
*Vice President*

Heather Lusk  
*Treasurer*

Katherine Irwin, Ph.D.  
*Secretary*

Michael Kelley, D.Phil.

Richard S. Miller, Prof. of  
Law Emer.

Robert Perkinson, Ph.D.

*Donald Topping, Ph.D.*  
*Founder 1929-2003*

P.O. Box 61233  
Honolulu, HI 96839

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

Email: [info@dpfhi.org](mailto:info@dpfhi.org)  
Website: [www.dpfhi.org](http://www.dpfhi.org)