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LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU  
State of Hawaii  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Written Comments Only

## **COMMENTS ON SCR160, SD1**

### **REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO REVIEW PAROLE POLICIES IN HAWAII AND OTHER JURISDICTIONS TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH PAROLE POLICIES IN HAWAII CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRISON POPULATION**

Comments by the Legislative Reference Bureau  
Ken H. Takayama, Acting Director

Presented to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Friday, April 4, 2008, 10:05 a.m.  
Conference Room 211

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on S.C.R. No. 160, S.D. 1. The Bureau takes no position for or against this measure but offers the following comments.

The resolution directs the Bureau to study the effects of parole policies on the prison population in Hawaii.

We believe that this study may be more difficult than it appears. As presently drafted, however, the scope of the study requested by this measure appears to be manageable.

We will endeavor to work with the Legislature to produce a study that is informative and useful.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to submit our comments.



STATE OF HAWAII  
**HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY**  
1177 ALAKEA STREET, GROUND FLOOR  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 160, SD 1  
REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO REVIEW PAROLE  
POLICIES IN HAWAII**

**HAWAII PAROLING AUTHORITY**  
Albert Tufono, Chairman

**COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senator Shan Si Tsutsui, Vice Chair

Friday, April 4, 2008; 10:05 a.m.  
Hawaii State Capital, Conference Room 211

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui and Committee Members,

The Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA) supports the intent of Senate Concurrent Resolution 160, SD 1, requesting the Legislative Reference Bureau to review parole policies in Hawaii and other jurisdictions to determine the extent to which parole policies in Hawaii contribute to the prison population. However, there are some concerns regarding the information contained in this bill.

1. Hawaii's indeterminate sentencing model is also discretionary parole model. The Urban Institute report entitled "Does Parole Supervision Work?" of Spring 2006, indicated that their research revealed discretionary parolees were rearrested at a lower rate than their mandatory parole and unconditionally released counterparts.
2. The Urban Institute report emphasized the importance of supervision strategies, focusing in on aligning supervision resources with risk; emphasis on both surveillance and treatment; swift and consistent responses for failures; and range of incentives for success. Since 2002, HPA has been an active member of the Interagency Council on Intermediate Sanctions (ICIS) and has adopted and utilized evidence based practices. All parole officers have been trained in the use of the Level of Service Inventory Revised assessment tool, motivational interviewing, cognitive behavior change and case planning. HPA has adopted

practices of risk principle, immediate attention to violations and contingency management.

3. While a significant portion of the prison population is comprised of previously parole offenders, HPA has been reducing the number of parole violators in the past years. In fiscal year 2006, the parole board conducted 415 parole violation hearings, in comparison to 304 conducted in fiscal year 2007. Clearer parole violation directives from the parole board in addition to increased supervision strategies from parole officers may have contributed to this decrease. It has always been HPA's objective to allow the offender to receive services in the community as long as it does not compromise public safety. In most of these cases, parole violating offenders are returned to prison before an arrest for a new offense occurs.
4. HPA released more inmates in fiscal year 2007 than in the two previous years. There were 785 inmates released on parole in fiscal year 2007 in comparison to 774 and 659 released in 2005 and 2006, respectively. The parole board has adopted the practice of allowing inmates to seek re-integration through the furlough process when possible. While this may delay the release of the inmate, it will give the inmate an opportunity to secure employment, housing and reenter the community before being paroled.

The information provided by HPA would contradict the purpose of this bill.  
During the

past year, more inmates were released from prison and less parolees have been returned for

violating conditions of parole. It is the goal of ICIS to reduce recidivism by 30% by the year

2010. HPA has been making the necessary adjustments to accomplish this goal.

We thank you for this opportunity to testify on this matter.



the  
**Drug Policy  
Forum**  
of hawaii

April 4, 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: SCR 160 SD1  
REQUESTING THE LRB TO REVIEW PAROLE POLICIES  
Decision Making: April 4, 2008, 10:05 a.m., Room 211

Position: Support

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii writes in support of this resolution which asks the Legislative Reference Bureau to review parole policies in Hawaii and other jurisdictions to determine the extent to which parole policies in Hawaii contribute to the prison population.

The LRB is also asked to review several criteria used by the paroling authority and examine rates of recidivism for offenders according to gender, prior criminal history, substance abuse history, type of offense, type of supervision and the new offense.

As we ask the Department of Public Safety to implement reentry programs and other programs to reduce recidivism, we must also consider whether paroling policies reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and to what extent those policies increase our incarceration costs.

Examining paroling policies is an important part of analyzing the big picture of Hawaii's incarceration policy which costs in excess of \$50 million per year.

Please pass the resolution so that we can know more about how well our paroling policies compare with other jurisdictions and whether those policies are effective.

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## COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Chair

Sen. Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair

Friday, April 4, 2008

10:05 AM

Room 211

### **STRONG SUPPORT SCR 160 SD1 - LRB REVIEW OF PAROLE POLICIES**

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 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.

SCR 160 SD1 requests the LRB to review parole policies in Hawai`i and other jurisdictions to determine the extent to which parole policies in Hawai`i contribute to the prison population.

Community Alliance on Prisons stands in strong support of this measure.

An independent review or outside look at policies and practices can vastly approve the efficiency and performance of an agency. Parole serves a very important function in protecting communities and is generally the last stop in the criminal justice continuum, making their service even more vital. It will be instructive to learn how other states are handling their parole populations to enhance reentry into the community and see where we might improve our practices.

Community Alliance on Prisons suggests that posting the LRB review on the web would be helpful to the community in understanding how decisions are made by HPA.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share our thoughts on SCR 160 SD1.