



Via E-mail: JUDTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Committee: Committee on Judiciary
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 12, 2009, 2:05 p.m.
Place: Room 325
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Support of H.B. 358, Relating to Drug Treatment

Dear Chair Espero and Members of the Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii (“ACLU of Hawaii”) writes in strong support of H.B. 358, which authorizes placement of certain offenders in secure drug treatment facilities.

The ACLU of Hawaii supports every effort to develop diversion programs and health-based solutions to individuals with drug addictions. In general, these types of programs are far more cost-effective – and far more effective at reducing recidivism – than incarceration and deserve the Legislature’s full support.

The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for over 40 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

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Testimony

Netra Halperin, individual

Judiciary

February 12

2:05 pm

HB358

Aloha Chair Karamatsu and members of the Committee.

I felt compelled to come and testify in front of your committee this morning. As a social worker, I can see first-hand that the drug and alcohol abuse epidemic proliferates in our society. I am aware that the State of Hawaii has invested a lot of resources in curing this epidemic and am grateful for that; however I feel that we need consider all options for treatment. Hawaii has a severe lack of in-patient drug treatment facilities. For many drug users, outpatient treatment isn't comprehensive enough. I think it is important for the State to use all possible resources.

I am aware of a facility in New Mexico, Second Chance Program, which has agreed to take care of Hawaii residents for approximately \$55. /day. This includes room, board and their very successful treatment program. This is less than what it costs

to house an inmate at Haleiwa prison. Many of Hawaii's prisoners have drug and alcohol addiction problems. By treating the addiction directly, it not only helps the individual stay clean and sober, but keeps them from committing crime. This then further benefits the rest of society.

This bill is not asking for additional funding, only creative allocation of existing funds already appropriated for drug abuse treatment. Thank you for allowing me testify on this important topic.

House Committee on Judiciary
Thursday, February 12, 2009 at 2:00 PM CR – 325
In Support of HB 358– Relating to Drug Treatment

Aloha Chair Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair Ken Ito and members of Judiciary committee.

I am Dr. Inam Rahman, a medical doctor practicing in Hawaii for 15 years.

I support and agree with the intent of HB 358.

The intent of this bill is to provide secured treatment facilities for certain drug abuse offenders. It is extremely important for our community at large. The enormous cases of drug offenders cause social and medical problems in the community, and lead to unsafe environment as offenders walk the streets while on rehab. Effectiveness of drug treatment does depend on the success of the rehabilitation program and the conducive environment provided. Exposure of repeat offenders to the same drug abuse environment on the streets makes them vulnerable to continue to be dependent on drugs.

The passage of this bill will ensure protection of our citizens, our families, our children and the community at large by providing a secured drug treatment facility.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify.

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