



TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
FROM: PAMELA LICHTY, MPH, PRESIDENT
DATE: APRIL 1, 2009; 11 A.M., ROOM 308
RE: SB 539, SD1, RELATING TO CORRECTIONS - **STRONG SUPPORT**

The Drug Policy Action Group supports this bill which would re-focus the Department of Public Safety on the critically important issue of re-entry. Without a new orientation towards re-entry we will continue with the woeful 50% rate of people returning to prison mostly for parole or probation violations -not for new crimes.

We must bear in mind that over 95% of the incarcerated individuals will be returning to the community and it's critical to prepare them for this transition and to provide them with marketable skills. This is vital for public safety as well as for helping these folks re-integrate into society. It should be a win win proposition.

Reentry is the wave of the future around the world as it is a highly cost-effective approach which enhances public safety by addressing both the underlying problems and the ongoing issues that non-violent offenders present with.

In short, strong re-entry programs help individuals to rebuild their lives, restore their families and revitalize our communities. Please support **SB539 SD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

The Drug Policy Action Group is a sister organization to the Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i. Since 1993 DPFH has been Hawai'i's leading organization dedicated to promoting responsible, effective, and research-based drug policies.

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