



Via E-mail: PBSTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Committee: Committee on Public Safety and Committee on Labor and Public Employment
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, March 19, 2009, 10:00 a.m.
Place: Room 309
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Support of SB 539, SD1, Relating to Corrections

Dear Chair Hanohano and Members of the Committee on Public Safety and Chair Rhoads and the Committee on Labor and Public Employment:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii ("ACLU of Hawaii") writes in strong support of SB 539, SD1, which reorganizes and renames the corrections program services division of the Department of Public Safety to the reentry services division.

The ACLU of Hawaii supports every effort to develop a comprehensive reentry system. In general, reentry programs are far more cost-effective – and far more effective at reducing recidivism – than incarceration. Every effort should be made to provide Hawaii's inmates with the support and services they need to become productive and responsible community members. Reorganizing the Department of Public Safety to ensure a clear focus on reentry and reintegration is a tangible step towards that goal.

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,

Daniel M. Gluck
Senior Staff Attorney
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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Rep. Faye Hanohano, Chair

Rep. Henry Aquino, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 19, 2009

10:00 AM

Room 309

SB 539 SD1 - RENAMING PSD'S INTAKE SERVICE CENTER DIVISION

SUPPORT

PBSTestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

Aloha Chair Hanohano, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative working to improve conditions of confinement for our incarcerated individuals, enhance the quality of justice, and promote public safety. We come today to speak for the 6,000+ individuals whose voices have been silenced by incarceration, always mindful that more than 2,000 of those individuals are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles from their homes and loved ones.

SB 539 SD1 renames the intake services center division of PSD to the reentry intake services division that will work closely and collaborate with the furlough program in each county, the Hawai'i Paroling Authority, and the correction program services division to ensure that the reentry needs of inmates are being met.

Community Alliance on Prisons is in support of SB 539 SD1.

Act 8 mandated a change in the Department of Public Safety's mission to focus on rehabilitation and reentry. This bill codifies that the Department will focus on reentry from day one of an individual's incarceration.

We ask the Committee to pass SB 539 SD1.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



the
**Drug Policy
Forum**
of hawai'i

March 19, 2009

To: Representative Faye Hanohano, Chair
Representative Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee on Public Safety

From: Jeanne Ohta, Executive Director

RE: SB 539 SD1 RELATING TO CORRECTIONS
Hearing: March 19, 2009, 10:00 a.m., Room 309

Position: Support

I am Jeanne Ohta, Executive Director of the Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 539 SD1 which reorganizes and renames the intake service center division of DPS to the reentry intake services division, whereby the reentry intake services division will work closely and collaborate with the furlough programs in each county, the Hawaii paroling authority, to ensure that the reentry needs of inmates are being met.

The proposal focuses efforts of the department, the programs, and all facilities on the concept of working toward the reentry from the time of intake. More than 95% of incarcerated individuals will reenter the community. This focus on reentry will help reduce parole violations, enable successful reintegration back into the community and thus also improve public safety.

Preparation for leaving prison by providing programming and job training can go a long way to improve their chances of becoming a productive member of the community.

Please pass SB 539 SD1 so that we may refocus our efforts on reducing recidivism and successful reintegration, which will then reduce future rates of incarceration.

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To: The Honorable Faye Hanohano, Chair
The Honorable Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
House Committee on Public Safety

From: Edwina Minglana-Kelly, Director of Employment Services
Goodwill Industries of Hawaii, Inc.

Date: March 19, 2009

Re: **Testimony in support of S.B. 539 SD1 – Relating to Corrections**

Goodwill Industries is among the largest human service non-profit organizations in Hawaii. Our mission is to help people find and succeed in employment. Last year, we placed 1,863 people find job in our community. Goodwill has almost fifty (50) years of experience assisting people who have employment barriers find jobs and gain self-sufficiency. Among the people we serve are people with a criminal history. This population experiences a great barrier to employment and requires extra assistance and support to successfully transition back into work and the community.

Goodwill supports S.B. 539 SD1 which establishes the Reentry Intake Services Division under the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”). This new division will be responsible for collaborating with the work furlough programs, the Hawaii Paroling Authority (“HPA”), and the correction program services division to ensure that the reentry needs of inmates are being met. Goodwill believes that increasing coordinated efforts with agencies and human service providers helping this targeted population will help streamline and strengthen the State’s criminal justice policies across the board, while also saving taxpayer money, reducing recidivism, and preserving public safety.

The reentry movement represents an important effort to provide social services to offenders as they reintegrate into the local community. Collaboration is a key component for all reentry programs. Reentry involves the participation and collaboration of a host of community-based human service providers such as Goodwill. These providers are often charged with delivering critical services for inmates as they transition from the criminal justice system. Services include core components such as education, employment, housing and counseling.

Research indicates that unless newly released prisoners can obtain jobs, successfully reunite with their families, find a place to live, and obtain substance abuse, health, and mental health treatment, the majority will return to prison within three years, many within six months. If however, these individuals receive comprehensive and integrated services during incarceration and within their first six months after release, they will experience significantly enhanced prospects for successful reintegration. Not only can this approach improve their lives and those of their families, it can also lead to financial and social benefits for the State.

Developing individualized plans and delivering coordinated services require major changes in the often contentious relationships between criminal justice and social service agencies as well as new partnerships with other organizations. Nonetheless, if the social disruption, and the public costs of recidivism are to be reduced, collaboration is essential.



Last fiscal year, Goodwill provided job training and placement services to over 1,200 individuals with criminal history. Our Job Connections program assists male and female offenders and parolees referred by HPA and work furloughs across the state. Our program offers comprehensive employment services. In the last program year, Job Connections serviced 359 clients, 307 (86%) were referred by DPS. Our experienced staff helped 237 of the 307 (77%) obtain and maintain employment and only 38 (12%) were discharged from our program due to re-incarceration.

S.B. 539 SD1 addresses the current deficiencies in the States re-entry initiatives and if properly implemented will help eliminate the need for new prisons and save money without sacrificing public safety. Increasing inter-agency and service provider collaboration is essential to success.

I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on this important bill.