

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

LATE TESTIMONY

March 18, 2010

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

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Executive Director

RE: HCR 135 (Medical Release Program)
Hearing: Thursday, March 18, 2010, 9:00 a.m., Room 309

Position: Strong Support

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i writes in strong support of HCR 135 which requests that the Department of Public Safety develop and implement a medical release program and provide information related to deaths occurring in Hawai'i, contract, and interstate compact prison facilities.

This measure allows the compassionate release of inmates who have terminal illnesses to spend their remaining time with their families. The department is required to set the criteria, eligibility requirements, and the procedure to request medical release, and to also estimate how long the process will take. The department should also make this information public, on its website so families of inmates are aware of the procedure.

This resolution also requests that the department provide the legislature with the reports of inmate deaths while in its custody. Legislators, who set policy need to be kept informed of the aging population in prisons and of deaths that occur.

Thank you for allowing us to testify in support of this measure.

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