



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HAWAII

TESTIMONY ON SB 212 RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
Tuesday, February 10, 2009
1:15 pm Conference Room 229

Testifier: Piilani Kaopuiki, LWV-HI

Aloha Chair Espero, Vice Chair Bunda, and members,

The League of Women Voters strongly supports the purpose of SB 212 to provide accountability and transparency to the public regarding the services provided by any vendor or state to house Hawaii prisoners. Despite the more than \$50,000,000 in public funds expended annually for prisoner services out-of-state, any information that is requested is not easily provided. Reasonable response and reasonable response times should be expected. Accountability and transparency should be a committed policy of any vendor. Privately owned out-of-state facilities should be no different. Tennessee judge chancellor Claudia Bonnyman ruled that Corrections Corporation of America was a "functional equivalent" to a governmental entity because its operation of jails and prisons is an essential governmental function and most of its revenues are taxpayer-funded.

This is a "Good Government" bill as it would require the state and contractor to provide access to the same information as is required of the department of public safety and includes the same remedies for the failure of contractors to comply. We must remember that 2,000 members of our community are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles from their homes and loved ones.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 212.