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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES – REGULAR SESSION 2010  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Thursday, March 25, 2010  
11:00 AM; Conference Room 308

**LATE TESTIMONY**

SB 2533, SD1 – RELATING TO AN AUDIT OF CONTRACTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY WITH THE CORRECTIONS CORPORATION OF AMERICA AND THE FEDERAL DETENTION CENTER.

Chair Rep. Marcus Oshiro, V. C. Rep. Marilyn Lee and Committee Members:

Aloha kakou. My name is Dante Keala Carpenter, Member-Advisor to ‘Ohana Ho’opakele. I speak in support of SB 2533, SD1 (Companion HB 415, HD1) which seeks a financial and management audit of the Dept. of Public Safety’s (“PSD”), contracts with the Correction Corporation of America and the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu, and other agencies performing services for PSD or utilizing PSD facilities, to be performed by the state auditor. The bill should really be addressing any and all contracts relating to housing of Pa’ahau.

‘Ohana Ho’opakele has proposed to work with PSD and other restorative justice groups to utilize the Kulani Correctional Facility as a pu’uhonua or wellness center for substance abuse treatment and intervention programs that take a holistic and cultural approach to help redirect the lives of those affected, among other programs and activities.

Notwithstanding the budget crisis and its implications on state facilities and operations, Kulani Correctional Facility has in the past and should continue in the future to serve a critical need for re-integrating *pa’ahao* back into communities in Hawai’i! This is in conjunction with the Community Safety Act of 2007, which requires the department to develop a comprehensive and effective offender reentry system plan for adult offenders exiting the prison system.

President Sam Kaleleiki (Kupuna Sam) and members continue an unwavering commitment to the mission and purpose of ‘*Ohana Ho’opakele*: to advocate for alternatives to prisons in the form of *pu’uhonua* for *pa’ahao*. Literally *pu’uhonua* is defined in Pukui & Elbert’s Hawaiian Dictionary (1986) as a “sanctuary, refuge, asylum or place of peace & safety” for *pa’ahao* – prisoners, convicts and/or inmates. In modern vernacular it can best be defined or classified as a cultural wellness center with all that title entails.

Obviously, any correctional complex or *pu’uhonua* should pose no threat to the community! Therefore, security classification of *pa’ahao* should be minimal, at best, as has been the past practice. Among other goals, the facility should incorporate in its design and operations, a fitting “work-place atmosphere” with establishment of programs incorporating the best agricultural model available coupled with established Hawaiian cultural teachings in order to approach self-sufficiency in production of necessary foodstuffs and respect of humanity. The programs would minimize costs to the taxpayer, provide opportunities to earn “good time,” participate in vocation education training and prison industries, and support the facility’s manpower needs, as well.

The above illustrates the very purpose of the Community Safety Act of 2007, which further requires PSD to develop comprehensive reentry plans and curricula for individuals exiting correctional facilities to reduce recidivism and increase a person's successful reentry and into the community.

One of 'Ohana Ho'opakele's goals would incorporate the return of deserving *pa'ahao* from mainland incarceration facilities which provide no opportunities to reduce recidivism, but rather encourage hardening and contributing to family disorientation, disintegration, and dissolution.

I formerly held the position of a Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman, which committee exercised oversight over Hawaii's Justice System, including operations of prison facilities. Without doubt, prison facilities and present activities, no matter how well-intended, still leaves a great deal to be desired regarding the rehabilitation and re-integration of *pa'ahao* back into the community. With the extreme shortage of facilities such as Kulani, we strongly recommend this audit to make realistic comparatives to both costs and meeting the needs of the Community!

Finally, a recent and positive meeting with Lt. Governor Duke Aiona in which Kupuna Sam, Reverend Ron Fujii, Kini Burke bears on the above discussion. Lt. Governor Aiona encouraged the organization in its efforts with the *Pu'uhonua* Cultural Concept and its application. I believe 'Ohana Ho'opakele is on the right track in its efforts to undertake a difficult but necessary task and wish them well in their endeavors.

We strongly recommend passage of SB 2533, SD1.

E laulima pu kakou! (Let's all work together.) Mahalo a nui loa.