

LATE TESTIMONY

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Rep. Faye Hanohano, Chair

Rep. Henry Aquino, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, & OCEAN RECREATION

Rep. Ken Ito, Chair

Rep. Sharon Har, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 11, 2010

10:15 a.m.

Room 309

SUGGESTIONS for SB 950 SD2 - Relating to Counties

PBStestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

Aloha Chairs Hanohano and Ito and Members of the Committees!

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

SB 950 SD2 authorizes law enforcement officers of the department of public safety and conservation and resource enforcement offices of the department of land and natural resources to use electric gun and related equipment while performing their duties.

Community Alliance on Prisons has been following the taser issue since its inception. Although we encourage the use of non-lethal weapons, we continue to be concerned about the unregulated use of tasers. The science does not yet appear to be in on their safety and use.

Before these weapons are allowed, policies including use of force, training requirements, protocols, and safety procedures must be in place. Safety procedures suggest that electric guns/tasers, not be used on children, pregnant women, the elderly, or where there are nearby crowds or flammable liquids. Proper training is crucial before we start arming agencies.

Some questions that the committee might ask are

- Do PSD and DOCARE receive the same training as police officers?
- Are there national standards for how and when to use these weapons?
- Who will train the various departments on the use of these weapons?
- Is there certification required by the user?

An October 21, 2009 article in the Arizona Republic entitled *Taser advises police not to aim at chest - For 1st time, firm acknowledges some heart risk reported*,

"The maker of Taser stun guns is advising police officers to avoid shooting suspects in the chest with the 50,000-volt weapon, saying that it could pose an extremely low risk of an "adverse cardiac event."

The advisory, issued in an Oct. 12 training bulletin, is the first time that Taser International has suggested there is any risk of a cardiac arrest related to the discharge of its stun gun.

... A Canadian government investigation in July concluded that Taser stun guns can cause death, spurring law-enforcement agencies across the country to put severe new restrictions on how and when police there can use the weapons..."

An April 2009 article entitled *Tasers Are the New Killers: Watch Their Popularity Surge!*

<http://www.alternet.org/story/134390/> reported:

"One place where the Taser trend actually appears to be changing is Canada, where high-profile taser deaths, along with a recent study on the dangers of Tasers, are leading to a serious rethinking of the weapon. Four months after a Canadian report found that the type of Taser model most often used by police officers can significantly raise the risk of cardiac arrest -- prompting Canadian officials to say they were pulling the model from its police ranks -- Taser use in Canada has decreased dramatically. Last week Reuters reported that the "use of Taser stun guns by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) dropped by almost a third last year, possibly because of a high-profile controversy about the weapon's safety and accusations the gun was being over-used."

A December 13, 2008 article, *The Taser Has Killed 400 People So Far -- So Much for It Being a 'Non-Lethal' Weapon*, <http://www.alternet.org/story/112403/> reported:

Recently, a new study discovered that the most common model of Taser used by police officers are far more hazardous than the company claims, capable of firing dangerous levels of electricity that can raise the risk of heart attack by as much as 50 percent. Shortly after the release of the findings, Canadian police departments pulled Tasers from their forces. ("Police departments in the United States, however, appear to have taken no similar action," reported the *Arizona Republic*.)..."

Suggestions:

- ***Adopt Strong, Enforceable Regulations.*** Law should be passed that would 1) only allow Tasers to be used as an alternative to deadly force and 2) prohibit the use of Tasers/electric guns in non-life-threatening situations.
- ***Mandate that Government Agencies Coordinate Training.*** Government agencies should establish and coordinate ongoing training and certification for the use of Tasers/electric guns
- ***Mandate Transparency.*** Data regarding Taser/electric gun use (policies and incidents) should be posted on the agencies' websites.
- ***Collect Data.*** Have independent evaluations done every two years. (Partner with local Hawai'i universities, we are lucky to have some awesome researchers here!)

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our thoughts with the committee.

Maureen Andrade

LATE TESTIMONY

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 11, 2010 8:42 AM
To: PBStestimony
Cc: randy.k.awo@hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for SB950 on 3/11/2010 10:15:00 AM

Testimony for PBS/WLO 3/11/2010 10:15:00 AM SB950

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Randy Awo
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Submitted on: 3/11/2010

Comments:

Maureen Andrade

LATE TESTIMONY

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 11, 2010 8:24 AM
To: PBStestimony
Cc: bktamfam@msn.com
Subject: Testimony for SB950 on 3/11/2010 10:15:00 AM

Testimony for PBS/WLO 3/11/2010 10:15:00 AM SB950

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Brooks Tamaye
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Comments:
Thank you