

SB 1357

SD 1



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

March 1, 2011

To: Senator David Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jeanne Ohta, Executive Director

Re: SB 1357 SD1 Relating to Public Safety
Hearing: Tuesday, March 1, 2011, 9:20 a.m., Room 211

Position: Strong Support

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i writes in strong support of SB 1358 SD1 Relating to Public Safety which requires the department of public safety to develop a plan to reopen the Kulani Correctional Facility implement transfers, and house newly sentenced individuals and report to legislature.

Hawai'i spends approximately \$60 million on out-of-state prisons. In light of those expenditures, the closure of Kulani was ill-advised. Instead of propping up our own economy, we exported the jobs at Kulani to Arizona and we continue to invest in mainland states instead of our own.

Kulani was also the largest sex offender treatment program in Hawai'i and the most successful sex offender treatment program in the nation, with less than a 2% recidivism rate since 1988. Why close such a successful facility?

Kulani also was the most successful reentry facility in that each individual there had to work and then manage the completion of their required programming in the evening. It developed good work ethics and developed marketable job skills in the individuals who served their sentences there. Again, why close such a successful facility?

The re-opening of Kulani would hasten the return of those housed in mainland facilities.

We urge the committee to require the reopening of Kulani. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

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COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. David Ige, Chair

Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Tuesday March 1, 2011

Room 211

9:20 a.m.

SB 1357 SD1 - PLAN FOR BRINGING OUR PEOPLE HOME

STRONG SUPPORT

<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/emailtestimony>

Aloha Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative working on prison reform and justice issues in Hawai`i for more than a decade. We respectfully offer our testimony always being mindful that Hawai`i has some 6,000 people behind bars with almost 1,800 individuals serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Native Hawaiians, far from their ancestral lands.

SB 1357 SD1 directs the department of public safety to develop a master plan for the return of Hawai`i inmates housed in mainland prisons and report to 2012 legislature.

Community Alliance on Prisons is in strong support of this measure. We applaud Governor Abercrombie for directly addressing this issue and the legislature for directing the department to develop a plan.

The Director testified that more than 30% of the men in Arizona are community custody, meaning that they should be on work furlough or in community based programs helping their transition from institutional to community life.

Let's look at who needs to be incarcerated, fix existing facilities and transfer funds from incarceration to community-based programs to help those ready to transition back to the community do so successfully.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



CARRIE ANN SHIROTA
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Sen. David Ige, Chair
Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Tuesday March 1, 2011
Room 211 at 9:20 a.m.

SUPPORT: SB 1357 SD1 – PLAN FOR BRINGING OUR PEOPLE HOME

Aloha Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee!

I am writing in support of SB 1357 SD1 that directs the department of public safety to develop a master plan for the return of Hawai'i inmates housed in mainland prisons and report to 2012 legislature.

I speak from my experience as a former Deputy Public Defender and Director of MEO's Being Empowered and Safe Together (BEST) Reintegration Program, and as a member of Community Alliance on Prisons. During the past ten years, I have advocated for alternatives to mass incarceration policies that have proven effective in reducing crime, and providing men, women and youth involved in the criminal justice system with the education, training, counseling, and treatment necessary to turn their lives around.

For too long, a dangerous criminal justice myth has been perpetuated that the only solution to address overcrowding and return our out-of-state incarcerated population home is to build more prisons. **Rather than building more prisons, we need to create a master plan that focuses on REDUCING OUR OVERALL INCARCERATED POPULATION.**

The good news is that a growing number of jurisdictions in the U.S. have enacting fiscally-sound, data driven criminal justice policies to reduce its prison population and correctional spending, while enhancing public safety. Many states have done so by partnering with the Council of State Government's Justice Center "Justice Reinvestment" project. The Justice Reinvestment strategy includes a four step approach: 1) Analyze the prison population and spending in the communities to which people in prison often return; 2) Provide policymakers with options to generate savings and increase public safety; 3) Quantify savings and reinvest in select high-stakes communities; and 4) Measure the impact and enhance accountability.

In more practical terms, states enact a variety of policy measures – early release for non-violent offenders; increased community based legal supervision; alternatives to incarceration such as residential substance abuse treatment, changes in sentencing laws, and probation and parole reform. The money saved by these initiatives is then reinvested to strengthen community institutions - schools, job creation, affordable housing, substance abuse treatment, and health

care, in neighborhoods where most people live before and return to after prison. (To learn more about the successful outcomes of Justice Reinvestment, visit <http://www.justicereinvestment.org>. See also, *Downsizing Prisons Report*, published by The Sentencing Project and Judith Greene).

Hawai`i has already taken a step in the right direction by submitting a letter of interest for technical assistance under the Department of Justice's Justice Reinvestment Initiative. **We should continue to partner with experts and other jurisdictions that have implemented evidence-based research policies that have proven cost-effective in reducing the overall prison population and returning its out-of-state prisoner population home.**

In addition to promoting Justice Reinvestment strategies in Hawai`i, our strategic plan to return out incarcerated population at home should include re-opening Kulani Correctional Facility. **Prior to its closure, Kulani had the capacity to provide beds for 160 men to return home. Moreover, the State purchased two prefabricated temporary housing structures to increase bed space at Kulani by 128 beds, thereby increasing the total capacity of bed space to 288 men.** As part of the master plan to return our population home, the reopening of Kulani as a correctional facility or community based reintegration wellness center should be incorporated.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Carrie Ann Shirota
Carrie Ann Shirota

Robert K. Merce
2467 Aha Aina Place
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96821
February 28, 2011

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. David Ige, Chair

Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Tuesday March 1, 2011

Room 211

9:20 a.m.

SB 1357 SD1 – Plan For Bringing Inmates Home

Strongly Support

Dear Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee,

I am a retired member of the Hawaii State Bar. Before retiring, my practice included the representation of prison inmates on a wide array of issues. This made me aware of the many ways in which our justice system is failing inmates and the community, and since retiring I have decided to try to do something about it.

SD1 which requires the Department of Public Safety to develop a plan to bring all Hawaii inmates home. I would like to see a shorter timetable for the plan (six months rather than one year seems appropriate to me), but I nevertheless support the bill.

I have read the testimony on this issue submitted by the Community Alliance On Prisons and agree with them that we should “look at who needs to be incarcerated, fix existing facilities and transfer funds from incarceration to community-based programs to help those ready to transition back to the community do so successfully”.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on this matter.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 28, 2011 8:12 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: mauicrowe@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB1357 on 3/1/2011 9:20:00 AM

Testimony for WAM 3/1/2011 9:20:00 AM SB1357

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: James Crowe
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: mauicrowe@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/28/2011

Comments:

Bring our family members back to Hawaii. The time is right. With the support of Governor Abercrombie and of the proven leadership of community members, we are ready to create the plan that we have eagerly needed and awaited.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, February 27, 2011 7:29 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: kat.caphi@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB1357 on 3/1/2011 9:20:00 AM

Testimony for WAM 3/1/2011 9:20:00 AM SB1357

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Kat Brady
Organization: Community Alliance on Prisons
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: kat.caphi@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/27/2011

Comments: