

JAN 20 2012

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COMMUNITY PLACEMENT PROGRAMS FOR FEMALE OFFENDERS
TRANSITIONING FROM INCARCERATION TO THE COMMUNITY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that, given the problems
2 associated with incarcerated offenders re-entering society, as
3 well as the high rate of recidivism, programs that effectively
4 assist the transition of former inmates from incarceration to
5 the community are critical. Once released from incarceration, a
6 former inmate faces such issues as housing restrictions,
7 workplace restrictions, and many informal restrictions that are
8 a result of prejudice against former offenders. The legislature
9 further finds that the costs of incarceration can be
10 dramatically reduced through the implementation of programs to
11 assist these individuals' integration into the community.

12 Research indicates that a multitude of differing issues are
13 associated with female versus male offenders. Women have
14 different pathways to incarceration, which often involve
15 unresolved sexual or physical trauma and substance abuse. In a
16 majority of cases, female offenders are nonviolent and do not
17 pose a threat to the community. For female offenders who are



1 incarcerated due to drug addiction, incarceration is not an
2 effective method for dealing with the addiction. To break the
3 cycle of substance abuse, crime, and incarceration, the root
4 problem must instead be addressed. Many female offenders will
5 return to incarceration if their drug and alcohol dependencies
6 are not treated and their recovery is not supported during their
7 transition from incarceration to the community. Currently,
8 there is a lack of adequate programs or access to programs that
9 can assist female offenders in successfully transitioning back
10 into the community. The great majority of women inmates will be
11 released into the community with a lack of skills and tools
12 needed for a successful transition back into the community.

13 The risk of female offenders becoming repeat offenders due
14 to substance abuse presents economic and social costs to the
15 public and to the State's social service system. The majority
16 of incarcerated female offenders are mothers of minor children
17 under the age of eighteen and problems stemming from breaking up
18 the family often become intergenerational.

19 Transitional programs that help female offenders to
20 successfully reintegrate into the community have had great
21 success. Unfortunately, Hawaii lacks adequate programs such as
22 those provided by TJ Mahoney & Associates, which offers a



1 transitional program for female offenders re-entering the
2 community. Community-based reintegration programs provide
3 structure, monitoring, and accountability for female offenders
4 returning to the community. They offer the tools and a setting
5 for practicing pro-social, responsible living, while instilling
6 values and beliefs that allow women to overcome obstacles while
7 remaining clean and sober. The need to provide adequate
8 services and to reach more female offenders is crucial.

9 Community placement is the final phase of transitional
10 programming, in which women move from the highly structured
11 living environment of a residential program such as the TJ
12 Mahoney & Associates Ka Hale Ho'ala Hou No Na Wahine program, to
13 living independently in the community while continuing to be
14 supported and monitored by program staff. Community placement
15 helps female offenders adjust to greater independence as they
16 transition from more to less structure, resulting in a more
17 integrated, seamless re-socialization and re-entry process.

18 The purpose of this Act is to support community placement
19 services, a key component of the successful re-entry process for
20 female offenders.

21 SECTION 2. (a) The department of public safety shall
22 establish a community placement program for women, such as the



1 TJ Mahoney & Associates program Ka Hale Ho'ala Hou Na Wahine, to
2 provide support services and assistance to female offenders
3 transitioning from incarceration to the community.

4 (b) The program established under subsection (a) shall be
5 funded without additional appropriations to the department of
6 public safety's budget authorized for fiscal year 2012-2013. It
7 is the legislature's intent that the department of public safety
8 realize cost savings to its 2012-2013 fiscal year budget by
9 transitioning qualified female offenders from incarceration to
10 community placement programs.

11 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2012.

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S.B. NO. 2574

Report Title:

Community Placement Program for Female Offenders

Description:

Requires the department of public safety to establish a community placement program for female offenders transitioning from incarceration back into the community.

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