



LATE TESTIMONY

Committee: Committee on Finance
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 24, 2011, 10:00 a.m.
Place: Room 308
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Support of H.B. 130, HD1
Relating to Community Reintegration

Dear Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii ("ACLU of Hawaii") writes in support of H.B. 130, HD1, Relating to Community Integration.

The ACLU of Hawaii supports every effort to reduce overincarceration and develop a comprehensive reintegration system. In furtherance of those goals, we support legislation like H.B. 130, HD1 that seeks to identify women who are eligible for reintegration and contract with gender-responsive community services providers to assist women in successfully transitioning back into the community.

The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for over 45 years.

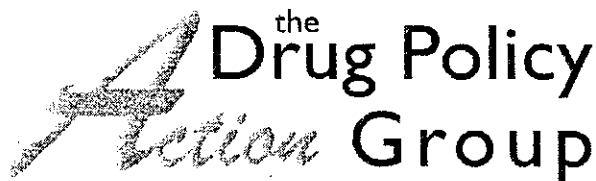
Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Laurie Temple
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ACLU of Hawaii

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A sister organization of the Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i
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Dedicated to safe, responsible, and effective drug policies since 1993

TO: House Committee on Finance

FROM: Pamela Lichty, MPH
President

DATE: February 24, 2011, 10 a.m., room 308

RE: H.B. 130, H.D. 1 RELATING TO COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION –
IN STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Committee. My name is Pam Lichty and I'm testifying in support of this measure on behalf of the Drug Policy Action Group.

We strongly support HB 130, HD 1 which would require PSD to determine the number of women who are eligible for reintegration into the community and contract with providers of gender responsive community services to assist women in successfully transitioning back into the community.

This bill makes sense on so many levels. It is fiscally sound, logical, and humane.

It has long been known that our female prison population, one of the fastest growing in the nation, is largely incarcerated for non-violent crimes or for drug-related crimes. Almost half of them are classified as "Community Custody" by the Department itself.

Transferring funding from corrections facilities to beds in community re-integration settings would help these women learn to reconnect with their families and communities and teach them to survive and thrive in the real world – with which they may have scant experience.

We thank you for hearing this measure today and urge you to pass it on to the full House with a strong recommendation. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Good Morning Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Committee Members;

I am offering my testimony in strong support of HB 130, as this bill holds significance not only to me, but the rest of society as well. This bill would benefit the state with their financial situation and the women who have earned the chance to reintegrate themselves back into society. Our current justice system contains blemishes, one in particular is the current policies regarding rehabilitation/reintegration of incarcerated individuals back into society. Though it is up to individuals to decide their fate, they need assistance from the state, nonprofit agencies, and individuals who are willing to help them to acclimate back into the world they are a part of. I have a couple of female friends who went through the justice system and were repeat offenders because they simply did not receive the help for a successful reintegration back into society. I see the same issues happening everywhere; where the state releases incarcerated men and women back from the prisons, and leave them to fend for themselves with little to no resources. In the past, the state has focused more on waging a "war" on non-violent drug offenders by mandating harsher sentences, warehousing them instead of treating them and spending money on mainland prisons. What is more effective, keeping prisoners incarcerated where they are nothing more than a leech on society, or keeping them out by offering reintegration services in prison as well as community-based gender responsive programs which can offer the necessary resources?

Sincerely,

James Miyashiro

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