

# HB130, hd1

**Measure Title:**

RELATING COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

**Report Title:**

Requires the Department of Public Safety 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. Effective July 1, 2020. (HB130 HD1) (\$)

**NEIL ABERCROMBIE**  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

**JODIE F. MAESAKA-HIRATA**  
DIRECTOR

**MARTHA TORNEY**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**JOE W. BOOKER, JR.**  
Deputy Director  
Corrections

**KEITH KAMITA**  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 130 HD1  
RELATING TO COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION**

by

**Jodie F. Maesaka-Hirata, Director**  
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Government and Military Affairs  
Senator Will Espero, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 15, 2011; 2:45 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) appreciates the Legislature's support of its efforts to provide evidence based reintegration programs for both the men and women who are incarcerated in Hawaii's adult correctional institutions. Although the State's tough economic situation over the past several years has caused PSD to drastically reduce its correctional programs to basic core services, PSD was still able to maintain at least two very worthy programs, Ka Hale Ho'ala Hou No Na Wahine, The Home of Reawakening for Women, a transitional program operated by TJ Mahoney for female offenders and Hina Mauka's Ke Alaula substance abuse therapeutic community treatment program for female offenders at the Women's Community Correctional Center, through continual funding by the Legislature.

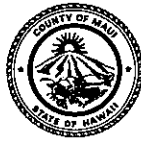
Currently, PSD is developing a Comprehensive Reentry Plan to address the needs of both male and female offenders that includes gender-responsive programming within our correctional institutions while remaining responsibly cognizant of the current fiscal difficulties facing our community. PSD, therefore, feels that it would not be prudent to pursue the enactment of HB 130 HD1, at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

Council Chair  
Danny A. Mateo

Vice-Chair  
Joseph Pontanilla

Council Members  
Gladys C. Baisa  
Robert Carroll  
Elle Cochran  
Donald G. Couch, Jr.  
G. Riki Hokama  
Michael P. Victorino  
Mike White



Director of Council Services  
Ken Fukuoka

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COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.mauicounty.gov/council](http://www.mauicounty.gov/council)

March 14, 2011

**TO:** The Honorable Will Espero, Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations and Military Affair

**FROM:** Gladys C. Baisa  
Council Member

**SUBJECT: HEARING OF TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2011; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 130, HD1, RELATING TO COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to require the Department of Public Safety 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.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. Our female imprisoned population rose by 89% from January 1, 2001 to June 30, 2008.
2. A classification study, commissioned by the Department of Public Safety, revealed that the majority of our incarcerated women are nonviolent (84%) and imprisoned for drugs or drug related crimes.
3. Almost half (48%) of our incarcerated women are classified as Community custody, which is defined by the department as "Individuals who are eligible to participate in community release programs such as work furlough, extended furlough or residential transitional living facilities".
4. Many of our incarcerated women have been having children since their teens. They need help navigating their way into the free world.
5. Community based gender responsive programs can help women chart a more positive course for their lives as well for the lives of their children.
6. Community based gender responsive programs provide structure, monitoring, and accountability and help women and girls develop the tools to lead responsible and fulfilling lives. They provide the solid foundation that is crucial when these women reenter the community by providing the necessary support through effective programming to address the women's specific needs.

For the foregoing reasons, I support this measure.

GCB:amm

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

76 North King Street, Suite 203, Honolulu, Hawai`i 96817

Phone/E-mail: (808) 533-3454/ [kat.caphi@gmail.com](mailto:kat.caphi@gmail.com)



## COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Sen. Will Espero, Chair

Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Tuesday March 15, 2011

Room 224

2:45 p.m.

**HB 130 HD1 - STRONG SUPPORT for Community Reentry Beds for Women**

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

Aloha Chairs Espero, 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, their ancestral lands.

HB 130 HD1 requires the Department of Public Safety 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. The SD1 defected the date, which we hope you will change to a more reasonable date.

Community Alliance on Prisons is in strong support of this measure. Hawai`i has achieved the dubious distinction of having one of the fastest rising female incarcerated populations in the nation. Our female imprisoned population rose by 89% from January 1, 2001 (403) to June 30, 2008 (760).

A classification study<sup>1</sup>, commissioned by the Department of Public Safety, revealed that The majority of our incarcerated women are nonviolent (84%) and imprisoned for drugs or drug-related crimes. almost half (48%) of our incarcerated women are classified as Community custody, which is defined by the department<sup>2</sup> as *"Individuals who are eligible to participate in community release programs such as work furlough, extended furlough or residential transitional living facilities"*.

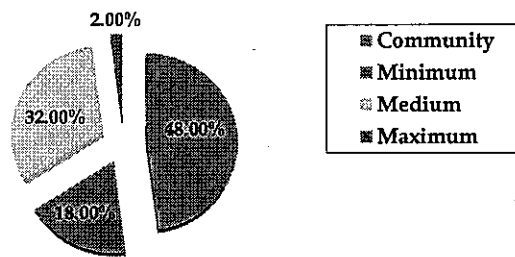
The following chart illustrates the findings of the Classification study.

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<sup>1</sup> Classification - A Systematic Approach for Correctional Management, Camille Camp, Patricia Hardyman, Ph.D., Presentation to Hawai`i State Legislature, January 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Public Safety 2008 Annual Report, Inmate Classification Office, page 18.

## Female Incarcerated Population



Based on the female imprisoned population, as reported in the Department of Public Safety's 2008 Annual Report that means that 365 of our incarcerated women are community custody. If 250 of these women were deemed to pose no threat to public safety, wouldn't it be better to fund programs that more appropriately address their needs and help them transition into the community and reunify with their families especially their children?

If, as the department has testified, it costs \$137/day to incarcerate an individual in Hawai'i, it is costing taxpayers \$12,501,250 a year to incarcerate 250 women who should be in the community according to the department's own definition.

Transferring the money from corrections to community reintegration beds is a more sane way of treating women who break the law - address their needs appropriately and help them learn how to live more pro-social and fulfilling lives. Many of our incarcerated women have been having children since their teens. They need help navigating their way into the free world.

Community based gender responsive reintegration programs can help them chart a more positive course for their lives as well as the lives of their children.

Community-based gender responsive reintegration programs provide structure, monitoring and accountability and help women and girls develop the tools to lead responsible and fulfilling lives. They provide the solid foundation that is crucial when these women reenter the community by providing the necessary support through effective programming to address the woman's specific needs. These programs actually enhance public safety.

Especially since women's pathways to crime are different from the pathways of men, it is important that gender responsive reintegration community based programs be adequately funded to reduce recidivism. These programs more directly affect the needs of females in the criminal processing system. Creating a network of these programs can facilitate women's contact with their children and help the family reunify.

Since the data show that children of incarcerated parents are six to seven times more likely than other children to end up incarcerated themselves, this is an investment that will help future generations. Let's break the negative cycle of inter-generational incarceration.

We must get correctional costs under control. Since 2000, appropriations for the Department of Public Safety have increased from \$128M to \$243.7M in 2009, an increase of 90% during that timeframe. What we are doing is not sustainable.

Jurisdictions around the country are awakening to this realization as their correctional budgets soar along with their deficits. Many are repealing mandatory minimum sentencing, working on alternative sentencing, releasing nonviolent, low-level drug offenders to reduce their imprisoned populations the failed war on drugs has created.

We are proud that Hawai'i's leaders (Governor Abercrombie, Senate President Tsutsui, Speaker Say, Chief Justice Recktenwald, and Interim PSD Director Jodie Maesaka-Hirata) have submitted a letter to the Department of Justice asking to be considered for Justice Reinvestment Initiative<sup>3</sup> technical assistance.

Senator Espero and Representative Hanohano, the former Chair of Public Safety in the House, are to be commended for setting the course for this to happen by submitting a letter requesting technical assistance from the Justice Reinvestment team in June of 2010.

Hawai'i's request is currently being vetted by the DOJ. Hawai'i's leaders have asked the justice reinvestment team to

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 highstakes communities; and
4. measure the impact and enhance accountability

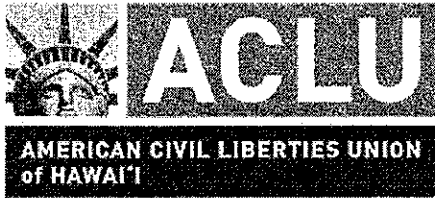
There are so many better, evidence-based and proven strategies that will save Hawai'i money and, more importantly, help those who have lost their way (and their families) find their place again in our communities.

**Treat the Moms, Save the Children!**

Mahalo for this opportunity to share our mana`o with the committee today.

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<sup>3</sup>Justice Reinvestment: <http://www.justicereinvestment.org>.



Committee: Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations and Military Affairs  
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, March 15, 2011, 2:45 p.m.  
Place: Room 224  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Support of H.B. 130, HD1  
Relating to Community Reintegration

Dear Chair Espero and Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations and Military Affairs:

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  
Staff Attorney  
ACLU of Hawaii

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i  
P.O. Box 3410  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801  
T: 808.522-5900  
F: 808.522-5909  
E: [office@acluhawaii.org](mailto:office@acluhawaii.org)  
[www.acluhawaii.org](http://www.acluhawaii.org)





the  
**Drug Policy  
Forum**  
of hawaii

March 15, 2011

To: Senator Will Espero, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair and  
Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations, and  
Military Affairs

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Executive Director

RE: HB 130 SD1 Relating to Community Reintegration  
Hearing: Tuesday, March 15, 2011, 2:45 p.m., Room 224

Position: Support

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i writes in support of this measure.

HB 130 SD1 requires the Department of Public Safety 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.

Hawai'i's female imprisoned population rose by 89% from January 1, 2001 (403) to June 30, 2008 (760). A study commissioned by the Department of Public Safety, revealed that the majority of our incarcerated women are nonviolent (84%) and imprisoned for drugs or drug related crimes.

Almost half (48%) of our incarcerated women are classified as Community custody, eligible to participate in community release programs such as work furlough, extended furlough or residential transitional living facilities.

Incarceration is an expensive policy that doesn't solve basic problems or help to reduce recidivism. A more fiscally sound policy is to fund programs that appropriately address the needs of women to help them successfully transition back to the community, successfully reunify with their families, and become responsible parents.

Community-based programs are not only more effective, they save money. We encourage the committee to shift funds from prison housing to community reintegration beds.

Community-based gender responsive programs provide structure, monitoring, accountability and help women and girls develop the tools to lead responsible,

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P.O. Box 241042  
Honolulu, HI 96824-1042

Phone: (808)-988-4386  
Fax: (808) 373-7064

Email: [info@dpfhi.org](mailto:info@dpfhi.org)  
Website: [www.dpfhi.org](http://www.dpfhi.org)

fulfilling lives. They provide the solid foundation that is crucial when these women reenter the community by providing the necessary support through effective programming to address the woman's specific needs.

We urge the committee to pass HB 130 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

# *A* the Drug Policy *Action* Group

A sister organization of the Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i  
PO Box 61233, Honolulu, HI 96839 ~ (808) 988-4386

*Dedicated to safe, responsible, and effective drug policies since 1993*

TO: Senate Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations and Military Affairs

FROM: Pamela Lichty, MPH  
President

DATE: March 15, 2011, 2:45 p.m., room 224

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

Aloha Chair Espero, Vice Chair Kidani 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 WAM with a strong recommendation. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



To: The Honorable Will Espero, Chair  
The Honorable Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations, and Military Affairs

From: Laura Robertson, President and CEO  
Edwina Minglana, Director of Employment Services  
Goodwill Industries of Hawaii, Inc.

Date: March 14, 2011

Re: Testimony in Support of H.B. 130, SD1 – Relating To Community Reintegration

Goodwill Industries of Hawaii, Inc. (Goodwill) is among the largest human service non-profit organizations in Hawaii. Our mission is to help people find and succeed in employment. Last year, we served over 13,000 people statewide and placed 1,667 people into jobs in our community; serving 1,290 previously or currently incarcerated individuals. Goodwill has fifty (50) years of experience assisting people who have employment barriers find jobs and gain self-sufficiency. Our Job Connections Program on Oahu primarily assists women offenders referred by work furloughs such as Project Bridge and TJ Mahoney.

Goodwill submits this testimony in support of H.B. 130 which urges the Department of Public Safety 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. Specialized reintegration services are needed to address the identified problem areas of women offenders as they transition back into the community. In our experience, women offenders come with a host of complex personal issues such as a history of sexual abuse. Many of these individuals need to obtain employment, housing, and continue treatment for substance abuse issues so they can re-unite with their children and families. A significant percentage (70%) of the female offenders Goodwill served last year had children under 18 years of age waiting for them to come home.

The needs of women offender differ in many respects — physically, emotionally, psychologically, and socially — from those of their male counterparts. Studies show that community reintegration programs have a higher success rate when the atmosphere is less confrontational and female counselors are present. The implementation of rehabilitation programs specifically designed with those differences in mind can effectively address the needs of female inmates and identify factors which may impede their ability to succeed post-release. Without experienced community-based providers such as Goodwill, the integration of women offenders back into the free world may not be as safe and successful.

We humbly ask for your support of H.B. 130.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this important bill.

# HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

**For:** **HB 130 RELATING TO COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION.** Requires the Department of Public Safety 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

**To:** COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS: Senator Will Espero, Chair; Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

**Time:** Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, 2:45 PM,

**When:** Conference Room 224

Good morning Chair Espero, Vice Chair Kidani and Distinguished Committee Members: My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide hui of more than 20 non-profit treatment and prevention agencies.

## **HSAC supports HB 130:**

Advancements in treatment methodologies in recent years, especially in gender responsive criminality treatment, have proved to be very effective as well as exceptionally cost-effective. Treatment works and saves money not just in the long run, but also in the current year.

Especially because of the current economic situation, we must develop new solutions with change leaders who can help Hawaii transition into new proven services through diverting existing funds.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify and are available for questions.

# TJ MAHONEY & ASSOCIATES

## Ka Hale Ho`āla Hou No Nā Wāhine

*The Home of Reawakening for Women*

524 Kaaabi St. Honolulu, HI 96817 Ph. 748-4300 Fax 748-4343 [www.reawakeningforwomen.org](http://www.reawakeningforwomen.org)

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### COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, GOVERNMENT & MILITARY AFFAIRS

Sen. Will Espero, Chair

Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

DATE, TIME

Tuesday, March 15, 2011, 2:45 pm.

PLACE

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 224

**Re: HB 130, HD1 - STRONG SUPPORT for Community Reintegration Beds for Women**

Aloha Chair Espero, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee. My name is Lorraine Robinson. I am the Executive Director for TJ Mahoney & Associates, Ka Hale Ho`āla Hou No Nā Wāhine (the Home of Reawakening for Women). I've served in this capacity for over fifteen years. Prior to this position, I worked as a social worker at the Women's Community Correctional Center. I am in strong support of HB 130, HD1.

TJ Mahoney is a leader in community corrections with over 35 years experience assisting offenders with community re-entry. We have contracted with the Department of Public Safety since 1992 and have received national recognition for our work with women offenders. We are the only program of our kind in Hawaii and utilize leading edge, best practice gender responsive programming. Our services are comprehensive in scope and address the complex and multiple needs of the population we serve. 68% of our residents have remained out of prison for 3 years after completion of our program.

Through many years of experience in working with women exiting prison, I have come to the clear conclusion that releasing a woman from prison without transitional support is a serious disservice to her, her family, and to our communities. In order to end up in prison, a woman has made a series of self-destructive and anti-social choices that have caused damage to her and to others. The typical female offender comes from a background of poverty, low educational achievement, family history of addiction and incarceration, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse (unresolved trauma), and few resources to address any of these risk factors. Protective factors are typically lacking which leads these individuals to seek out self-medication through drugs, creating addiction, and leading to a lifestyle of criminality and incarceration. In order for a woman to succeed in the community after release from prison, she must change not only her behaviors, but her beliefs about herself and what she is capable of accomplishing. This type of change does not happen in a vacuum. It is a process that takes time and practice. We would be remiss to assume that women who have lived the lifestyle that led them to incarceration, when released from prison and left to their own devices, will be able to set in motion and sustain the changes necessary to build a pro-social, responsible and productive life. In the vast majority of instances, it simply cannot be done without assistance and sustained support.

Female offenders are typically non-violent and do not pose a risk to public safety. The majority of them will be released to the community and need skills and tools to assist them in navigating the obstacles they face in reconstructing a meaningful and satisfying life. There is no better place for this to occur than in a structured and monitored community setting where they are held accountable for their actions and attitudes while gradually increasing their skills, practicing them daily while interacting in the community at large through employment, attending school, and fostering their sense of self-efficacy. Reentry services for women are cost effective in that they impact the social fabric of our community by decreasing recidivism and contributing to stopping the revolving door, thus preempting the intergenerational cycle of abuse, addiction, crime and incarceration. Research has clearly shown that successful re-entry programs lead to less recidivism, less crime, fewer victims, and increased public safety. Restoring people's lives makes for good public safety. I strongly support HB 130, HD1. We all benefit from safer communities. Please support this most important piece of legislation.

National Association of Reformed Criminals  
Andy Botts & Franklin Jackson  
1765 Ala Moana Blvd. #1388  
Honolulu, Hawaii, 96815  
March 15, 2011

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & MILITARY AFFAIRS**

Senator Will Espero, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair  
Tuesday, March 15, 2011  
2:45 PM  
Room 224

**HB 130 HD1- RELATING TO COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION**

**STRONG SUPPORT**

Contracting with community based programs is cost-effective in the short and long term, and there is a major backlog of 'Community' status inmates eligible for immediate release on work-furlough. TJ Mahoney has professionally-run state and federal reintegration programs, and I have personally worked with many of the wahines from their program. Passage of this bill would be a sign that the house supports the governor's agenda in that direction, and gives DPS the green light to pursue those plans.

Mahalo,

Andy Botts



**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS**

Sen. Will Espero, Chair

Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Tuesday March 15, 2011

Room 224

2:45 p.m.

**HB 130 HD1 - STRONG SUPPORT for Community Reentry Beds for Women**

Aloha Chairs Espero, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee!

My name is Carrie Ann Shirota and I am writing in support of HB 130 HD 1 that requires the Department of Public Safety 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.

The bottom line is that we continue to incarcerate too many people, for too long. This is particularly true of the majority of the incarcerated female population whom have been convicted on non-violent related crimes.

Research has shown that long term imprisonment for non-violent drug related charges is costly and ineffective. Yet, we continue to lock up and warehouse women convicted of these types of crimes, and we rarely provide for quality substance abuse treatment and other counseling services.

Let's invest in sound correctional policies and practices that help women address their unique pathways into the criminal justice system, and provide them with the necessary training, treatment and support to rebuild their lives, and the lives of their families.

Please support HB 130 HD1!

Mahalo,

Carrie Ann Shirota, JD  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793  
cashirota@aol.com

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 13, 2011 1:39 PM  
**To:** PGM Testimony  
**Cc:** mauicrowe@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB130 on 3/15/2011 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for PGM 3/15/2011 2:45:00 PM HB130

Conference room: 224  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: James Crowe  
Organization: Individual  
Address:  
Phone:  
E-mail: [mauicrowe@gmail.com](mailto:mauicrowe@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 3/13/2011

**Comments:**

I strongly support reintegrating nonviolent women inmates back into their families, back into the workforce and also back into educational opportunities. The time is right for Hawaii to take these specific steps. The time is right for us to undertake sound correctional management.

James Miyashiro

March 15, 2011

Conference Room 224

2:45 P.M.

**Testimony in Strong Support of H.B. 130**

Good Afternoon Chair Espero, Vice Chair Kidani, and P.G.M. 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 its 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 drain 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

Given by:

Jolene Molinaro

March 15, 2011

Conference Room 224

2:45 P.M.

### **Testimony in Strong Support of H.B. No 130**

Good Afternoon Senator Espero and Senator Kidani and P. G. M.

Committee members. My name is Jolene Molinaro and I am a student at UH Manoa in the MSW Program. I have testified before you for the companion bill to H.B. 130 and I wish to give testimony for this one. I wanted to be here today to support this bill but due to a schedule conflict, I am unable to appear in person. I am in support of this bill because I am concerned about the plight of incarcerated women. I feel that I am a good example of what these women may experience upon reintegration back into the community from prison. As a non-violent ex-offender and as a woman, I am a member of a unique and diverse social group who faces its own issues. As women have gained more responsibilities, we are more susceptible now than ever to a variety of new problems. Some of these problems are spousal abandonment, addiction, crime, and incarceration, often combined with single parenthood. Through my experiences, I became interested in the issues of incarcerated women and incarcerated women who are mothers in particular. This is

what drives me in my goal of becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. But my reaching my goal and my education would not have been possible without my good fortune of having a great post-incarceration support network upon my release from prison after my *second* incarceration.

In 1995 I experienced spousal abandonment, divorce and a custody battle which lead to major depression and anxiety, I had no one to turn to for support and without health insurance I was unable to seek therapy services. Sometime after this point I was introduced to meth-amphetamines which seemed to be the answer to my depression. As you know, this drug is extremely addictive and so I quickly headed down the path of my destruction. I was eventually arrested and charged with possession and promotion of a dangerous drug in the 3rd degree as well as for paraphernalia. I suddenly had 6 felony charges from the one arrest and was sentenced to 5 years for each count to be serves concurrently. I served my time and I completed a drug treatment program inside the prison and was paroled after 2 1/2 years. I had no options for housing in a new area other than the area I had come from due to lack of finances and a sponsor to parole to, so I mistakenly chose to parole to a friend who I knew was using drugs. I had every intention to do well and I was excited about the possibilities of a new start. However, I was not prepared for the difficulties an ex-offender faces in obtaining employment. While it is illegal to deny an ex-offender employment, the reality is that it happens

everyday and unless the you know someone who will hire you, chances are you will rarely find a job as soon as you need one, which is immediately if you are to meet the conditions of parole and provide for yourself and your family. I also was not prepared for the stigma I experienced. It was a very painful and emotional time for me as I realized that I was no longer considered a good citizen. Though I had done my time, I would never be taken seriously by a potential employer again. I had been laughed at and turned away for enquiring for a job at some businesses I applied to because of my criminal background. And while I knew that I was the only person responsible for my situation, I could not help but wonder how women like me were supposed to “go forth and do well” from then on if we didn’t at least have the support and opportunity to do so.

I stayed clean and sober even while I continued to live in a drug abusing household, I searched for employment continuously during that time but I could not find a job. I became very discouraged. I thought “I am doing my part to get a job and do well, all I need is a chance”. My daughter and I had been relying on friends for food and shelter but they were not longer able to help us. I wanted to provide for myself, but was unable. We became homeless and I was rearrested on the day before Christmas Eve for stealing a watch that I wanted to give my daughter as a gift. I knew it wasn’t right, but I was desperate. I felt that she had suffered so much and I wanted to give her something special. It was the worst

choice I could have made for us. It cost me custody of my children and my freedom, it gained me another 5 year sentence and a repeat offender status. All I had done was prove the stigma was true.

I know that a strong post-prison support network could have benefitted me during that time. I feel it would benefit the hundreds of non-violent ex-offending women in Hawaii. If we had access to social workers and psychologists to assist with emotional issues, mental health and family reunification, housing assistance and employment support and educational opportunities, (especially those women and their children without family and or financial support), I am positive the recidivism rate would drop significantly. **I know in my case I would not have re-offended.**

Many women have feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, and lack of personal power. I had very low self-esteem and felt that I lacked control of my life. I believe these feelings can contribute to relapse and re-offending. There is no doubt in my mind that my daughter and I would have benefited from the skill and knowledge of an effective professional helper while I needed to make several important life decisions. I feel that rehabilitation, besides incarceration, includes providing resources, programs, and opportunities so that ex-offenders can make informed and effective decisions. I hope to see women being released from prison

with a life plan, a solid support network, and access to possible resources. Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Respectfully,

Jolene Molinaro



To: Senate Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations, and Military Affairs; Senator Will Espero, Chair

Date: Tuesday, March 15, 2011, State Capitol Conference Room 224, 2:45pm.

Re: HB130 HD1 - Relating to Community Reintegration

Chair Espero and Committee Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to submit written testimony **in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 130 HD1: Relating to Community Reintegration**. My name is Mayumi Levesque, and I am a graduate student in social work. I live in the Lower Manoa area (96822).

My field practicum at T.J. Mahoney & Associates allows me to work with women who would be directly affected by the passage of this bill: women who have been to prison and are currently preparing for their transition into the community. Gender-specific programs are critical to their success, as it provides them the support they need to be successful in all aspects of their lives: working, gaining education and skills training, taking care of themselves (physically, mentally, and spiritually), connecting with families and communities, and giving back to them.

As graduate student of social work, it is extremely important to me that the needs of women such as those at T.J. Mahoney's are met. Their success would directly impact the communities to which they would reintegrate following their release; so it is in everyone's interest that their success is ensured.

I urge you to support women, families, and communities by **voting yes on HB130, HD1**.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Mayumi Levesque  
Senate District 10