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April 9, 2012

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator David Ige, Chair

Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 11, 2012

9:35 a.m. - Room 211

**STRONG SUPPORT FOR SCR 6 SD1 - COMMUNITY PLACEMENT FOR NON
VIOLENTWOMEN**


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

I am the grandmother of Shelby, age 7, whose mother has been in the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu for the past 3 years. Her father is currently in Saguaro prison in Arizona. They are both non-violent drug offenders. They have both lost all parental rights to Shelby, and I have adopted her.

Shelby has been with me for 4 years and still cries for her mother and father. She misses them and constantly asks why she can't see them. If they were in community placement, it would enable us to have visits with her mother more often and would also save the state quite a lot of money. What we are doing now, locking up every drug addict, is not working. The state is going broke and the families are being torn apart. We need more drug treatment and community placement so that these citizens can work and pay their own way instead of costing the state money.

Please pass this bill so that mothers and their children can be reunited. Hopefully we will pass a bill for the men also.

Thank you for listening.


Erin Welsh



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

April 11, 2012

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

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Executive Director

RE: SR 6 SD1 Requesting the Department of Public Safety to Reinvest Funds used for Incarceration to Structured Community Placement Programs for Eligible Non-Violent Female Offenders

HEARING: April 11, 2012, 9: 35 a.m., Room 211

POSITION: SUPPORT

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

The vast majority of women are convicted for non-violent drug or drug-related offenses. We believe that their needs would be better served by community-based programs rather than incarceration. Community-based programs are less expensive than incarceration and provide an opportunity for offenders to address their pathways to crime and drug use. These programs also allow more successful transitions back into the community.

The Justice Policy Institute released a briefing paper in 2008, "Substance Abuse Treatment and Public Safety." The report finds that "community-based drug treatment programs have been shown to reduce the chance that a person will become involved in the criminal justice system after release from prison." Community-based programs reduce incarceration rates, reduce incarceration costs, and improve public safety by reducing crime.

These types of programs have the potential to provide women with adequate housing, community supervision, medical care, drug treatment, reintegration programs, employment training and transitional services. In addition, they will help establish much needed community beds for treatment; will help reduce recidivism; and will facilitate and improve family relationships.

We respectfully request that you pass this measure.

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

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator David Ige, Chair; Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

DATE, TIME Wednesday, April 11, 2012, 9:35 A.M.

PLACE Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211

Re: SCR 6 SD1 – COMMUNITY PLACEMENT FOR NON VIOLENT WOMEN - STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Ige, 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`ala Hou No Nā Wāhine (the Home of Reawakening for Women). I've served in this capacity for over sixteen years. Prior to this position, I worked as a social worker at the Women's Community Correctional Center. I am in strong support of SCR 6 SD1.

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, trauma informed programming. Our services are comprehensive in scope and address the complex and multiple needs of the population we serve. 81% of our residents have remained out of prison for 2 years after completion of our program.

A Community Placement program, such as the one in the proposed legislation, helps facilitate a more seamless and successful reintegration process for women transitioning from prison. It is an in-between step where women receive support and supervision as they transition from more to less structure. Women typically parole to the community facing many unforeseen challenges; even more pronounced when paroling directly from the prison environment directly to the community (as opposed to completing a program such as TJ Mahoney & Associates).

Community Placement affords women the opportunity to live in the residence they plan to parole to and "test the waters" with supervision and support as part of a structured and gradual re-integration process. This critical program addresses a gap in services for women in their re-integration process and insures a greater likelihood of success as they re-enter the community. Community Placement 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. Community Placement and helping restore these women's lives makes for good public safety. I strongly support SCR 6 SD1. We all benefit from safer communities.

Please support this most important piece of legislation.