

SB 2885

RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL HEALTH CARE.

Allows the Director of Public Safety to appoint the Mental Health Branch Administrator and Mental Health Section Administrators without regard to Chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



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

TED SAKAI
DIRECTOR

Martha Torney
Deputy Director
Administration

Max Otani
Deputy Director
Corrections

Shawn Tsuha
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2885
A BILL RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL HEALTH CARE
Ted Sakai, Director
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 4, 2014, 3:45 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

Chairs Espero, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) **strongly supports** SB 2885, which would enable the Director to appoint qualified mental health professionals to PSD's Mental Health Branch's leadership positions, without regard to Chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Since December 2008, the Department has entered into a settlement agreement with the United States Department of Justice to improve mental health services to persons incarcerated at the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). Since that time, substantial improvements have been made, including the creation of additional positions to manage mental health services statewide.

Filling these positions has been a challenge due to the unique nature of providing mental health services within the correctional setting. Chronically mentally ill inmates most often have histories of failed treatment within the community, resulting in the

escalation of antisocial and criminal behaviors that brings them into the criminal justice system.

Given the attributes of the population, and the services that are located within correctional facilities, the Department has had to aggressively recruit qualified candidates, and offer salaries that commensurate with experience through contracts, rather than filling positions authorized through the budget.

To resolve this dilemma, the Department is requesting the passage of this bill, which would exempt from civil service, the Mental Health Care Branch Administrator and the Mental Health Care Sections Administrator positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.