

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



# LATE TESTIMONY



## STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC)

Testimony of  
Leimana DaMate, Executive Director

Before the Senate Committee on  
Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Tuesday, February 17, 2015  
1:05 P.M.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In **SUPPORT** of  
Senate Bill 433  
**Relating to Incarcerated Parents**

Senate Bill 433 requires that the Department of Public Safety (PSD) intake service centers to coordinate the collection of data regarding incarcerated parents.

The Aha Moku System encompasses the eight main Hawaiian Islands and supports the traditional and generational resource knowledge of the people who are connected to each of the 43 moku and more than 500 ahupua'a. This knowledge is handed down generation to generation by experts in site-specific resource methodology. However, in the past decades the percentage of Native Hawaiians who have been incarcerated has risen. Tragically, a new trend of gaps in the generational knowledge of resource methodology can and probably does occur when the children of incarcerated parents are not given the opportunity to learn traditional practices because one or more of their parents are incarcerated.

We believe that Native Hawaiian children are impacted by the trauma of having parents sent to prison. This bill begins the necessary process of identifying and addressing the needs of children with incarcerated parents by requiring the Department of Public Safety to collect intake data relating to parents in prison and their children.

**We strongly support SB 433 and urge this committee to pass this bill.**

Mahalo nui loa.

CARTY S. CHANG  
INTERIM CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
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ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

# LATE TESTIMONY

**Date:** 02/17/2015

**Time:** 01:05 PM

**Location:** Conference Room 229

**Committee:** Senate Public Safety,  
Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

**Department:** Education

**Title of Bill:** SB 0433 RELATING TO INCARCERATED PARENTS.

**Purpose of Bill:** Requires PSD intake service centers to coordinate the collection of data regarding incarcerated parents.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) would like to provide comment on SB 433.

Many factors outside of the classroom affect student performance, and the challenges associated with having an incarcerated parent create significant educational risk for a student. HIDOE currently uses student outcomes data to identify and target students who are at risk of falling behind academically. Additional information from the Department of Public Safety about incarcerated parents would significantly augment these efforts.

**LATE TESTIMONY**

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2015 7:17 AM  
**To:** PSMTestimony  
**Cc:** ikepono@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB433 on Feb 17, 2015 13:05PM\*

**SB433**

Submitted on: 2/17/2015

Testimony for PSM on Feb 17, 2015 13:05PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Isaiah Kala Kaaihue	King Kamehameha HCC	Support	No

**Comments:**

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# LATE TESTIMONY

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2015 10:16 AM  
**To:** PSMTestimony  
**Cc:** malnoaton@aol.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB433 on Feb 17, 2015 13:05PM

## SB433

Submitted on: 2/17/2015

Testimony for PSM on Feb 17, 2015 13:05PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Malia Peters	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: Aloha, My name is Malia Peters. I am a parent of a child whose father was incarcerated eighteen years ago. I strongly support SB 433 Relating to Incarcerated Parents. Eighteen years ago my life was forever changed when my husband (now ex-husband) committed a horrible crime sentencing him to a 20 year prison sentence, which left my three-year-old son and I suddenly in a very difficult situation. While we understood the severity of his crime and prison sentence, we've had a long and challenging road ever since. Helping families of prisoners who are left behind has become a passion in my life, encouraging them that they too can overcome these tough situations. My testimony is simply because I would like to make the road less rough, so that our state and society can have a better chance of decreasing the cycle of incarceration. While there are various estimates of the number of children nationwide who have at least one parent that is incarcerated (over 2 million), we have no idea in our State of Hawaii, of any number of children that are affected. Studies have also shown that in terms of negative impacts on children, incarceration may be worse than the death of a parent or the divorce of parents. When a parent passes away or when parents divorce, families receive a lot of sympathy, love, compassion, and financial support. In Hawaii, to get a divorce families are required to attend "Kids First", a program to help families survive divorce. However, when a parent is sentenced to prison, there is no "program" or "class" to attend, and very often there is no sympathy. Many family members witnessed or were the victim of the crime, and there is often no emotional or financial assistance for families. The surviving spouse, significant other, or grandparent is often the sole provider putting physical, emotional, mental, and financial strain on families. Something more concerning is the evidence that children who have a parent in prison are more likely to become incarcerated themselves as teenagers or adults, thus continuing the "cycle of incarceration" that sadly becomes generational in some families. Having been through this personally, I wish I could be there in person to share with you first hand how difficult this experience was for my son and I. I never wanted to ask for help for fear that I would minimize the horrible crime that my husband had committed and offend the victim and their family. I also didn't ask for help because I was embarrassed to share why my husband was incarcerated. I thought this would be a reflection of the kind of person I was...on my character. When I became desperate enough to seek assistance, I didn't know where to turn, and when I did try to apply for various types of assistance we didn't qualify because I was working. My single income however was not sustainable to support my son and I, which forced me to take a second job. My son now lost both his parents, became mute, and we had no medical coverage to get him the emotional support he needed. It was a horrible thing to go through and it is only by the grace of God, the family I was blessed with, that I am able to stand strong today, with my son grown and by my side, sharing my story with each of you. It's taken me

years to talk about this but I am realizing that this may be my purpose in life...to make a difference for others who are going through the same thing. I recently joined the Hawaii Prisoners Resource Center, dba Holomua Center, who has established a working group to explore the issues surrounding children and families impacted by incarceration. We are called the Family Reunification Working Group (FRWG), the group is comprised of representatives from several organizations and service providers who want to support this population. Having data/statistics illustrating the number of children affected by incarceration is critical for so many reasons. At the very least, we need to know as a state and as a society, how many children (especially children under the age of 18) are affected. We need to understand who the caregivers are for these children in the parents' absence. This information is important to understand the magnitude of what we think is a concerning issue (is it as bad as we think)? Finally, we need data to enable our state and various organizations to submit for grants that can provide various types of support (physical, emotional, educational, financial) to families who are specifically affected by incarceration. Some have argued/commented that prisoners won't be truthful on the intake form and won't voluntarily provide this information for fear they will be penalized for child support, or for fear that their children will be taken away from them. I disagree, and feel strongly, that if they fully understood the reason for these questions, and that their family may qualify for help, that they would cooperate and provide the information. I remember my husband feeling helpless and frustrated knowing the hardship we were going through because of his careless acts, which lead to bad behavior behind bars. Participating in answering these questions would be a small thing a prisoner with a family could do while behind bars to improve the circumstances their family is in. Without this type of basic information, it is very difficult to advocate and seek assistance and opportunities for this unique population. Our state needs help taking care of these children and these families that are affected. We need to reduce the cycle of incarceration and we should do whatever we can to make seeking outside funding opportunities possible. Mahalo nui to each of you for your service, and for your consideration of this letter of support. With much aloha and blessings,  
Malia Peters

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# LATE TESTIMONY

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2015 8:41 AM  
**To:** PSMTestimony  
**Cc:** burgharc@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB433 on Feb 17, 2015 13:05PM

## **SB433**

Submitted on: 2/17/2015

Testimony for PSM on Feb 17, 2015 13:05PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
cheryl	Individual	Support	No

Comments: This is important! We are losing to many children and the connections to help them.

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