

SB 563

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Requires the department of public safety to establish a mental health first aid training program that includes mandatory eight-hour sessions triennially for law enforcement personnel, correctional officers, and other public safety officials under the department to teach skills used for identifying and assisting individuals with mental health disorders and crises.

PSM/HTH, WAM

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
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Corrections

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Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

February 11, 2015

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 563
A BILL RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Nolan P. Espinda, Director
Department of Public Safety

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

Senate Committee on Health
Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 11, 2015, 1:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 414

Chairs Espero and Green, Vice Chairs Baker and Wakai and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) opposes Senate Bill (SB) 563 as creating redundancy to existing internal policies and procedures on required training.

Adult Corrections Officers and other frontline correctional workers are already required to exceed the triennially notated level of training.

PSD Law Enforcement officers are similarly internally trained, and the implementation of the same semi-annual certification achieved in Corrections would be readily achievable without this proposed legislation.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL & MILITARY AFFAIRS

Sen. Will Espero, Chair

Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Sen. Josh Green, Chair

Sen. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 11, 2015

1:45 p.m.

Room 414

SUPPORT for SB 563 - TRIANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

Aloha Chairs Espero and Green and Members of the Committees!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies for almost two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 5,600 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars, always mindful that more than 1,600, and soon to be rising number of Hawai'i individuals who are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Native Hawaiians, far from their ancestral lands.

SB 563 requires the department of public safety to establish a mental health first aid training program that includes mandatory eight-hour sessions triennially for law enforcement personnel, correctional officers, and other public safety officials under the department to teach skills used for identifying and assisting individuals with mental health disorders and crises.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports training public safety officials and staff on best practices for addressing individuals with mental health issues.

We do not know what the current training includes for recognizing and addressing mental health issues, however, we do know that the percentage of incarcerated persons with mental health disorders has jumped from 16% to 24%, as reported to the legislature by a former Director. This escalation requires that public safety officials and staff understand and are trained to handle incidents involving mentally ill incarcerated persons. This is a workplace safety issue as well as the issue of safety of all persons under the "care and custody" of the state.

However the department does it, Community Alliance on Prisons supports triannual training - an ongoing training program -- that includes mental health as well as other health and safety issues.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

SB563

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for PSM/HTH on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Aaron Hunger	Remington College Honolulu C.J. Student Coalition	Support	No

**Region 11 (HAWAII) Public Safety Regional Planning Committee
Regional Public Safety Planning Meeting**

**Testimony on
SB 563**

**February 11, 2015
1:45 pm**

Thank you to Senator Espero who invited me to speak today, and to the Public Safety Commission for hearing my testimony on this very important bill relating Mental Health Training for police.

My name is Aaron Hunger. I am currently an instructor of Criminal Justice at Remington College, a doctoral student at The University of Hawaii at Manoa, and have served as a lecturer periodically at both of the University of Hawaii's campuses at Manoa and West Oahu in Political Science and Public Administration respectively. I was also a police officer for over 16 years before retiring from an industrial accident. During that time, I served the majority as a patrolman, but also served as a traffic officer, diver, marine patrol, special response team (SRT) member, and other numerous specialized task forces.

I was both P.O.S.T. and F.D.L.E. certified for police work in California and Florida, and served as a corrections officer in California and Germany. During the 1990 Gulf War, I also had the honor to be assigned to a military police corrections unit that was responsible for custody and control of military personnel that were sentenced for war crimes, and espionage. I am aware of the unique responsibilities that come with providing care over our citizens, and have worked in departments where community trust building was critical. This is not an easy job, and I would like to begin by commending the men and women who devote themselves to ensuring public safety by doing this, often unrewarding, job.

This brings me to why I would like to provide testimony today. As a police officer that has worked with mentally ill, handicapped, and challenged individuals in both patrol and correctional settings. The advanced training that I received by my individual agencies was critical in my successful dealings as a police officer/ corrections officer. The fact that no standards board exists that oversees the police, is the reason that this bill becomes critical. I support any additional training that can be given to police to aid them in understanding and correctly interacting with these citizens.

The idea that training that focuses on other priorities will accomplish the same results, is simply a falsehood. This is critical and necessary for the protection of the public, the advancement of our police force, and the successful future interactions that build trust. I fully support this bill.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2015 10:35 AM
To: PSMTestimony
Cc: paulo.pt13@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB563 on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM
Attachments: S.B. No. 563 P.P.docx

SB563

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for PSM/HTH on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Paulo Paulo	Remington College Honolulu C.J. Student Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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SB563

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for PSM/HTH on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
robert ford	remington college Honolulu C.J. Student Coalition	Support	No

S.B. 563

My name is Robert Ford. I am a student of the Remington College criminal justice program. This is a testimony on behalf of bill S.B. 563. After reviewing S.B. 563, I vote yes in full support of this bill. My only area of concern is that the mental health first aid training should in fact be annually instead of a “one time” type of training. I recommend amending the bill to state annual training.

SB563

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for PSM/HTH on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Justine Fritz	Remington College Honolulu C.J. Student Coalition	Support	No

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Justine Fritz and I was given the opportunity this morning to discuss the further training of police officers, specifically assorted with the mental health and first aid training.

This bill will allows our police officers to have training for individuals that have a mental instability. They will be able to recognize if an individual has a mental illness and be able to provide them with the proper health services they need. With our current homeless situation being above the normal state and the infiltration of homeless "mainlanders" to this island. Our community will be able to provide adequate assistance for each situation that may arise. I support this bill with the hopes that it provides those needed changes. It will also allow our community to place trust and respect into our officers again. I support this bill.

SB563

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for PSM/HTH on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Aisha Gaea	Remington College Honolulu C.J. Student Coalition	Support	No

S.B. NO. 563

I support the Senate Bill No. 563 regarding the mental health first aid training. I feel that adding training to teach law enforcement officers how to deal with and treat the mentally ill will be very beneficial to both the officers and the public. Seeing as though most of the mentally ill that the law enforcement officers come across are homeless, and our homeless population is very high, I believe that this bill is not only going to be beneficial but also necessary. I also think that because of the high amount of mentally ill homeless people our law enforcement officers come across every day, perhaps training them annually may be better than triennially so they are kept up to date as much as possible. Other than that, I fully support this bill.

SB563

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for PSM/HTH on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Candace Hashimoto	Remington College C.J. Student Coalition	Support	No

My name is Candace Hashimoto, and I am from the Remington College C.J. Student Coalition. I am writing in regards to Senate Bill NO. 563. I support this bill, but I believe that it would better if the eight-hour training occurs annually, rather than every 3 years.

From: PSMTestimony
To: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Subject: RE: Submitted testimony for SB563 on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2015 10:13 AM
To: PSMTestimony
Cc: aug43t@hotmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB563 on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM

SB563

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for PSM/HTH on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Valenitia Augafa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Senate Bill Number 563

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Valenitia Augafa and I was given the opportunity this morning to discuss the further training of police officers, specifically assorted with the mental health and first aid training.

This bill will allows our police officers to have training for individuals that have a mental instability. They will be able to recognize if an individual has a mental illness and be able to provide them with the proper health services they need. With our current homeless situation being above the normal state and the infiltration of homeless “mainlanders” to this island. Our community will be able to provide adequate assistance for each situation that may arise. I support this bill with the hopes that it provides those needed changes. It will also allow our community to place trust and respect into our officers again. I support this bill.

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From: Nancy MI <relaxamommy@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2015 11:00 AM
To: PSMTestimony
Subject: Testimony for SB 563

I am in support of SB 563 which calls for mental health first aid training for all law enforcement and correction officers and all other personnel that may possibly work with individuals who have mental health disorders.

I strongly feel this training should occur on an annual basis and be taught by a licence psychologist, psychiatrist, or an Advanced Practice Nurse with a specialty in mental health. This training is necessary in order to meet one of the important objectives of the act: "preventing a mental health disorder from deteriorating into a more serious condition..."

In addition, the training will hopefully remind people who may encounter individuals with mental health disorders that some people who may be experiencing mental health problems may also be suffering from post traumatic stress disorder due to being victims of violent crimes, e.g. rape, attempted murder, domestic violence, etc. Therefore, sensitivity, knowledge and awareness is very much needed when assisting individuals in mental health crisis.

Testimony by:

Nancy Manali-Leonardo
E-mail: relaxamommy@yahoo.com
T.: (808) 542-1556
Date: February 10, 2015

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Saturday, February 07, 2015 9:18 PM
To: PSMTestimony
Cc: Awai76@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB563 on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM

SB563

Submitted on: 2/7/2015

Testimony for PSM/HTH on Feb 11, 2015 13:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha Senators! I strongly support SB563, to increase awareness and promote education and knowledge by requiring public safety personnel to train at least triennially on mental health problems. Most personnel know about substance abuse but know very little about mental health problems that could be the cause of the abuse. Establishing mental health first aid training programs, an evidence based practice and recognized in America since 2007, are important in our islands. With a masters in criminal justice administration, a certified psychiatric rehabilitation practitioner, an advocate for mental health and cultural issues, a behavioral health consultant, certified in Mental Health First Aid, and a participant of SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services subcommittee on consumer/survivor issues since 2005 in Washington DC, these trainings are very important in our public safety system and everywhere a person faces trauma. Please support this bill. I am sorry I will be unable to testify in person, I am attending a conference on the Mainland. Mahalo! Ellen Kekipi Awai

Promoting Mental Health First Aid Training

Senate Bill Number 563

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Steven Hamel and I was given the opportunity this morning to discuss the further training of police officers, specifically assorted with the mental health and first aid training.

This bill will allow our police officers to have training for individuals that have a mental instability. They will be able to recognize if an individual has a mental illness and be able to provide them with the proper health services they need. With our current homeless situation being above the normal state and the infiltration of homeless "mainlanders" to this island. Our community will be able to provide adequate assistance for each situation that may arise. I support this bill with the hopes that it provides those needed changes. It will also allow our community to place trust and respect into our officers again. I support this bill.

Promoting Mental Health First Aid Training

Senate Bill Number 563

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Leuluniu Otineru and I was given the opportunity this morning to discuss the further training of police officers, specifically assorted with the mental health and first aid training.

This bill will allow our police officers to have training for individuals that have a mental instability. They will be able to recognize if an individual has a mental illness and be able to provide them with the proper health services they need. With our current homeless situation being above the normal state and the infiltration of homeless "mainlanders" to this island. Our community will be able to provide adequate assistance for each situation that may arise. I support this bill with the hopes that it provides those needed changes. It will also allow our community to place trust and respect into our officers again. I support this bill.