

## LATE TESTIMONY

### COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & LABOR

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

### COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Jill N. Tokuda  
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

### NOTICE OF HEARING

Thursday, March 30, 2017 at 9:50am  
Conference Room 211  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB845, HD2, SD1 RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY. REQUIRES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Honorable Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair Rhoads, Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the committees, I am Chantal Keliioomaluu, a Master of Social Work Candidate at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and a staff member of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's John A. Burns School of Medicine's Department of Native Hawaiian Health.

**I wish to submit this testimony in strong support of SB1039/HB845 HD2.** While I study in the related fields to this topic **my testimony is spoken from personal experience.**

#### **Who he is:**

(At the time) 52 year old male of Primarily Native Hawaiian and Portuguese descent. Suffers from Schizophrenia. He is the brother of my husband's first wife and Godfather of my step-son.

#### **How we found him:**

On a day In February 2015 on a cold rainy day random events put into a chance meeting with my husband's ex-brother-in-law. We spotted him standing at the base of the stairway of the apartment building he had inhabited prior to being incarcerated. Long hair, void of expression, wearing prison sweats, and holding a black garbage bag of belongings. **He had been released from prison the day we found him.**

#### **His Family:**

Unbeknownst to him while he was in prison for five years the last of his immediate family that had been on 'Oahu had either passed away or relocated to the mainland with the rest of his immediate family due to economic instability.

**What he had:**

A check from the prison from meager prison work and money that his mother had put in his prison account over time that he had saved. A paper from the prison with his name and picture on it that can be used to cash the check at a specific bank.

**What we did:**

He asked us for a ride to his grandmother's house in Hauula. We informed him that she had passed away and that he could not go to the house. We offered for him to come to our house until he could figure out what to do next. He came to our house and he slept on our couch in our family living room.

We contacted his mother and sister on the mainland. His mother mailed her copy of his birth certificate to us. This was the only document he had. He could not order his birth certificate at Dept of Health because he had no identification. We could not order his birth certificate for him at DOH because we were not a direct blood relative.

**Getting an ID**

In order to get medical to get medication for his schizophrenia he needed an state identification.

In order to get a State ID he needed two forms of ID...a Birth Certificate and a Social Security Card.

In order to get an SS card he needed two forms of ID. EVEN TO GET INTO THE FEDERAL BUILDING TO APPLY TO ORDER A SS CARD YOU NEED AN ID (luckily the guards let him through with the BC

**HE ONLY HAD A BIRTHCERTIFICATE—NOT TWO FORMS OF ID.** Both the for State ID and SS card there is a list of 7-10 items that can be accepted as a second form of ID such as pay stubs, school records, medical records etc NONE OF WHICH HE HAD ACCESS TO AFTER BEING IMPRISONED. NONE OF WHICH ACCEPT THE PAPER PRISON "ID" WITH HIS NAME, DOB, AND PICTURE. SS dept emphatically repeatedly stated that they do not accept ANY PRISON RECORDS AT ALL.

After months of repeatedly attempting to gather documents unsuccessfully, going in and out of state and federal offices, filling out applications, standing in lines for hours at a time to end up with nothing we finally got a small break. After being transformed multiple times and telling story over and over to get to a voicemail of prison records in an attempt to get a copy of his Diagnosis records to assist with getting a prescription filled for him. The one prison records employee was out that day and it felt like another dead end. When she returned my call the next day and responded in a helpful manor and went out of her way to help our situation—I was overjoyed—she did not have to help us but she did. She mailed us his prison medical records.

Attempting yet another long-shot we took the prison medical records to the SS office and submitted them with his BC for his SS card application. The BC for some reason, although it was on the official green BC paper from DOH, did not have the official pressed seal on it (some agencies had noticed and some had not). SS office had emphatically stated prior that they do not

accept any prison records. Crossing our fingers and holding our breaths we turned in what we had. The person at the window accepted the prison medical records and BC and approved his application for a new copy of his SS card!!!!

After however many weeks it took for the SS card to come in the mail we were able to finally get his State ID which enabled us to apply for emergency assistance and disability and medical and start the process of applying for housing.

In-between of all of the above we were navigating Doctor appts which he had a temporary approval for through the case management Adult Mental Health services that he was given upon exiting prison. The doctor had to give him sample medications which did not match what he had been being given because he did not have medical so the doctor could not prescribe him his own meds yet. Getting a disability bus pass—which the person had let us slide on parts of the documentation needed to get.

The process was mentally and physically exhausting, frustrating, and time consuming for ME and I do not have a mental illness, was not facing a new world, am very skilled and resourceful at navigating systems and had resources of money, transportation, wifi, smartphones, mailing address etc. I also was in school full-time, worked part-time, and was raising five kids in five different schools in four different towns and my husband works six-days a week. Naturally, I could not spend all day every day to these situations.

The only way we made any progress is when the person at the desk either did not catch a detail or “looked the other” way and let it slide. Otherwise we never would have gotten this far. It should not be determined by the mood of the person at the desk whether people can access their records.

Things were slowly coming together but it was also very precarious dealing with his mental illness.

After just over six months of living on our couch in our living room and approximately two weeks prior to his final SSI meeting that would have deciphered his qualification to receive SSI benefits and provide his only hope of an income to establish housing—the situation and the illness got the better of him and he left our residence to enter the bowls of the ‘Oahu homeless. We were so close.

### **History:**

That prison stint was his second. There were several decades of symptoms of schizophrenia but he had refused to be diagnosed or access help. Behaviors and symptoms associated with untreated schizophrenia were what ended him in prison. In that prison stay he had finally been diagnosed and medicated for schizophrenia. That was a huge step.

### **NEXT AND NOW:**

He was MIA for approximately a year and a half. No one knew if he was dead or alive. His sister moved back to Hawai’i. She filed a missing persons report and trust every time there was an unusual or un-named, or home-less death she was calling to find out if it was him. On another happens chance meeting we found him again. We talked to him briefly and notified his sister of where we had seen him. For months she walked the area weekly and sometimes daily at various

times of the day to try and find him in that area. She finally found him a few months ago. She has regular contact with him, she takes him food. He is homeless and now has no ID or documents after having things stolen while living on the streets. She is trying to get him to engage with services and or connect an outreach worker to him.

There is no way to know how different the outcomes would have been had he had ID when he was released from prison. But I know that it would have given us a running chance, it would have put us hundreds of steps and hours and days closer to accessing services that could have prevented him from being homeless and from his declining to a possibly unrecoverable form of the disease. It sounds simple to get an ID but coming out of prison with nothing it is not easy at all. IT IS EXTREMELY HARD AND FRUSTRATING AND VEXING. It was only luck that got us as far as we did.

IF HE HAD HAD DOCUMENTATION AND IDENTIFICATION WHEN HE WAS RELEASED THIS STORY COULD HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY DIFFERENT. PERIOD. It has been on my "to-do" List to initiate actions to change this system. I did not know that it was currently being addressed. I happened to have a class assignment to give oral testimony on a bill and on that day this bill happened to be on the calendar. I AM EXTREMELEY HAPPY THAT THIS BILL IS BEING ADDRESSED AND THAT IT HAS GOTTEN THIS FAR.

PRISONER ARE WARDS OF HE STATE/FED. THEY ARE IN CUSTODY. THERE IS FIDUCIAL DUTIES WHEN YOU HAVE CUSTODY OF SOMEONE WHETER THEY ARE AN ADULT OR A MINOR. IT IS THE STATES FIDUCIAL DUTY TO PROVIDE PRISONERS WITH IDENTIFICATION UPON RELEASE OF PRISON (I am confident that if a person breaks the law without ID, the system can find a way to ID and re-incarcerate them).

PLEASE ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM TO PROVIDE ALL PEOPLE WITH ID PRIOR TO RELEASE. NO ID IS A HUGE BARRIOR TO SUCCESSFUL REINTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY. THS BILL IS DEAD UNLESS IT IS FUNDED. PLEASE FUND IT.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted by,

Chantal Keliihoomalu  
MSW Candidate,