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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2454, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO HAWAII CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES

by

Nolan P. Espinda, Director
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Labor
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 15, 2018; 1:15 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Chairs Nishihara and Tokuda, Vice Chairs Wakai and English, and Members of the
Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) **strongly supports** House Bill (HB)
2454, House Draft (HD) 1, which would create a 3-year pilot employment project
within PSD's Hawaii Correctional Industries, to assist former inmates reentering
society.

Many offenders have very limited resources to find gainful employment upon
release, which is a key factor in keeping them from recidivating. The Department
believes that the pilot project proposed in this measure would greatly assist in their
transition back into our communities as contributing members of society.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL & MILITARY AFFAIRS

Sen. Clarence Nishihara, Chair

Sen. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 15, 2018

1:15 pm

Room 229

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 2454 - HCI PILOT PROGRAM

Aloha Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Wakai and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai'i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of all the people who have died in our facilities including, JESSICA FORTSON, JOEY O'MALLEY, DAISY KASITATI, ASHLEY GREY. and the approximately 5,500 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars or under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that approximately 1,600 of Hawai'i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

HB 2454 establishes a three-year Correctional Industries Former Inmate Employment Pilot Project within the Department of Public Safety to assist former inmates as they reenter society.

Community Alliance on Prisons is in strong support of this measure. Hawai'i Correctional Industries is really expanding its reach. This bill helps individuals cross that bridge from incarceration to reentry by utilizing the skills that they learned while incarcerated.

We are big fans of mentoring and this program develops peer mentors for folks on the path these individuals had previously walked. This could be a great "Return on Investment" for Hawai'i's overburdened taxpayers!

Programs like this are so important for our people who have spent many years away from their communities. It follows the principle of "Each one, Teach one", which is an effective strategy to help people learn. Someone who has walked the path of their mentee knows the barriers and challenges ahead and can help an individual develop the resiliency it takes to live in the "free world". We want more people contributing to our economy, finding meaningful work, and helping our communities.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify. We urge passage of this bill.

*One of the greatest values of mentors is the ability to see ahead what others cannot see
and to help them navigate a course to their destination.*

John C. Maxwell

HB-2454-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2018 9:37:25 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/15/2018 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
De MONT R. D. CONNER	Testifying for Ho'omanapono Political Action Committee (HPAC)	Support	Yes

Comments:

We continue to STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill. Mahalo.

LATE



HB2454 HD1

RELATING TO HAWAII CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs
Senate Committee on Labor

March 15, 2018

1:15 p.m.

Room 229

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB2454 HD1, which would establish a pilot program within Hawai'i Correctional Industries (HCI) to provide full-time employment to five former inmates, as a potential approach to better rehabilitating pa'ahao and enhancing their ability to successfully re-enter society.

HCI's inmate work programs currently provide pa'ahao with valuable opportunities to develop marketable skills, prosocial behaviors, and a positive work ethic while incarcerated. These opportunities give offenders a sense of agency and value, facilitating their rehabilitation. The valuable job skills pa'ahao learn in these HCI programs also help to ease their transition back into the community, reducing the likelihood of recidivism. The pilot program in this measure would go one step further toward ensuring the rehabilitation and stable reintegration of pa'ahao, by allowing former pa'ahao a first opportunity at full-time employment within HCI, through which they may also act as peer mentors for currently incarcerated participants in the HCI work programs. OHA hopes that the demonstrated success of this pilot program will lead to its further expansion, and will encourage other state agencies and private organizations to consider employing ex-pa'ahao to help stabilize their reentry into society.

Therefore, OHA respectfully urges the Committees to **PASS** HB2454 HD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

HB-2454-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2018 12:30:34 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/15/2018 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for OCC Legislative Priorities Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

Good afternoon. My name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **HB2454 HD1**, relating to the Hawaii Correctional Industries; Pilot Project; and Former Inmate Employment.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of **HB2454 HD1** and support its passage.

HB2454 HD1 is in accord with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it establishes a three-year Correctional Industries Former Inmate Employment Pilot Project within the Department of Public Safety to assist former inmates as they reenter society.

Specifically, the DPH Platform states, "[w]e support restorative justice that repairs the harm caused by criminal behaviors and reintegrates the offenders as contributing members of society. Likewise, we support opportunities for those who have been incarcerated to affect a smooth transition back into the community and make available health, educational, and other assistance programs needed to allow them to become productive and respected members of the community. We want the practice of private for-profit detention centers and prisons prohibited." (Platform of the DPH, P. 5, Lines 273-278 (2016)).

Given that **HB2454 HD1** establishes a three-year Correctional Industries Former Inmate Employment Pilot Project within the Department of Public Safety to assist former inmates as they reenter society, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com, Tel.: (808) 258-8889



Aloha Chairs Nishihara and Tokuda, and members of the Senate Committees on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, and Labor,

The Young Progressives Demanding Action – Hawai‘i, representing nearly 600 registered members, **strongly supports** HB2454 HD1. We believe strongly in the idea of transforming the state's criminal justice system into what activists have begun referring to as a “restorative justice” model. The restorative model stands opposite of a criminalization or punitive model, with incarceration and detention as its cornerstone policy—which is what Hawai‘i, and most of the country still adheres to, to its own detriment.

After decades of research and years of best-practice modeling in other jurisdictions, there can be no doubt whatsoever that a restorative justice model is cheaper, more effective at reducing crime, and more humane than the punitive model. There is no good reason not to implement restorative justice programming in our state, which can include substance abuse rehabilitation, victim/offender mediation, conferencing and dialog, peace-making circles, victim assistance and involvement, former prisoner assistance and involvement, reduction of DMI (Disparate Minority Incarceration), real restitution and community service via an expanded parole and probation program.

In Hawai‘i, where Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations are dramatically over-represented in the criminal justice system, agricultural work programs and place-based, identity-rehabilitation programs are also important. These programs allow offenders a chance to reconnect with the land, traditional food systems and traditional cultural practices, something that is crucial to the framework of an established island identity. The loss of this identity is a major contributing factor to low education and job attainment levels, low health and wellness outcomes and, therefore, high rates of contact with the criminal justice system.

Another crucial component of the restorative model is assistance in transitioning current inmates out of incarceration and into society once again. One of the top contributing factors to recidivism—a person’s

relapse into criminal behavior, often after the person has received punitive sanctions for a previous crime—is the difficulty former inmates have in finding legitimate income sources once they are released. The economic and social impacts of incarceration, in particular, have been shown in multiple studies to be high factors in contributing to recidivism.

Criminal records present steep barriers to securing jobs, housing and benefits. These barriers heighten the difficulty of reentry into society for prisoners after they are released. The costs of recidivism are high, and other states have already taken action as a result. In Ohio, state policymakers standardized the use of a validated risk-assessment instrument to focus limited treatment and supervision resources on those individuals assessed at the highest risk for reoffending. In Kansas, state leaders awarded performance-based grants to community correction agencies, partnered with local communities where recidivism rates were highest to improve post-release supervision, and enhanced housing and workforce development services to better meet the needs of people coming out of prison. Michigan officials invested heavily in the state's Prisoner Reentry Program, prioritizing funding for housing, employment and other transition support services in order to provide the most effective community-based programming for released individuals. In Ohio, the recidivism rate fell by 11 percent from 2005–2007, and by 15 percent in Kansas, while Michigan's rate dropped by 18 percent during the same period.

Investing in restorative justice programs, including workforce pilot programs that give the inmates opportunities to develop skills, is a proven way to reduce recidivism. But we must do more. Government agencies should be focused on the reentry population with initiatives aimed to improve outcomes in health, housing, education and employment.

Skills do not automatically translate into jobs, particularly when the stigma of conviction holds so much weight with prospective employers. This will need to be addressed as well. Lastly, the potential for so-called “prison labor” to become exploitative is a constant problem that we must remain vigilant against. We must ensure that this program and other workforce programs in the future continue to function for the benefit of the incarcerated person, and not at his or her expense.

Mahalo for your support,

Will Caron
Social Justice Action Committee Chair
8083874920

HB-2454-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2018 1:05:10 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/15/2018 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
E. Ileina Funakoshi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2454-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2018 9:55:18 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/15/2018 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rachel L. Kailianu	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

In STRONG SUPPORT.

HB-2454-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2018 4:27:50 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/15/2018 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2454-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2018 11:03:15 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/15/2018 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara Polk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chairs Nishihara and Tokuda, Vice Chairs Wakai and English, and members of the committees:

I am in strong support of HB2454 HD1 that would provide a pilot employment program for former inmates. The recidivism rate is so high in Hawaii that an ACO told me last week that they often say to inmates being released, "See you next week." This is simply unacceptable! It is essential that the Department of Public Safety begin making a serious effort to help former inmates reintegrate into the society, including by finding work. This is a small and short-term project, but a step in the right direction. Other states have already implemented much more robust programs of this type that serve substantial numbers of former inmates. I would wish the State would be more aggressive in implementing programs of this type that serve more than 5 former inmates!.

However, I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO PASS HB2454 HD1 as a frist step.