

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

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No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2454  
RELATING TO HAWAII CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES

by  
Nolan P. Espinda, Director  
Department of Public Safety

House Committee on Finance  
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 27, 2018; 11:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) **strongly supports** House Bill (HB) 2454, 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.

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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## COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Rep. Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

11:00 am – FIN #1

Room 308

## STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 2454 – FORMER INMATE EMPLOYMENT PILOT PROJECT

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen 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 the families of **ASHLEY GREY, DAISY KASITATI, JOEY O'MALLEY, JESSICA FORTSON AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED UNDER THE "CARE AND CUSTODY" OF THE STATE** as well as 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 and crossing that bridge from incarceration to reentry and utilizing the skills that these individuals learned to be peer mentors to those travelling on the path they had walked.

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 working in our community. 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**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 9:47:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Rachel L. Kailianu	Ho`omana Pono, LLC	Support	Yes

Comments:

IN STRONG SOPPORT.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 11:36:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Carrie Ann Shirota	Hawai'i Justice Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

Hawai'i Justice Coalition comprised of organizations and individuals are united in our work to reduce the number of people incarcerated in Hawai'i's jails and prisons. We seek to shift the state's spending priorities away from mass criminalization and incarceration towards rehabilitation, education, restorative justice, health and human services. We believe that comprehensive criminal justice reform makes fiscal sense, and builds safe and healthy communities.

We support HB 2454 for the following reasons:

1. Job training and employment opportunities post-release play an important role in helping individuals to rebuild their lives.
2. Research has proven that employment decreases the risk of recidivism.
3. Stable employment allows formerly incarcerated persons to gain financial independence, and contribute to their families.
4. The proposed Pilot program would allow five formerly incarcerated persons to continue to work with HCI at a fair market wage, and permit mentoring opportunities.

**Proposed Amendment**

1. Expand the number of participants in this Pilot Project from five to twelve, and mandate that at least half of the participants selected are female, and half selected, are male. This would promote the goal of gender equality.

Please pass HB2454.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 1:53:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

**PRESENTATION OF THE  
OAHU COUNTY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

**DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII'**

TO THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2018

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

11:00 A.M.

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2454, RELATING TO HAWAII CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES

To the Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair; the Honorable Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Good morning. My name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") Legislative Priorities Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill No. 2454, relating to the Hawaii Correctional Industries' pilot project in addressing the needs of former inmate employment.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of House Bill No. 2454 and support its passage.

House Bill No. 2454, 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 re-enter 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 House Bill No. 2454 authorizes the Hawaii Correctional Industries to establish a pilot project that addresses the needs of former inmate employment, 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

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**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 9:42:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Alan Johnson	Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

An employment pilot project would help offenders greatly increase their successful outcome to reconnect with their community in a more productive, sustaining way. Reentry can be vastly more effective if programs are in place to help the offender focus on employment, obtain housing and address their substance abuse and mental health issues.

Aloha, Alan Johnson, Chair HSAC



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Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the House Committee on Finance,

The Young Progressives Demanding Action – Hawai‘i, representing nearly 600 registered members, **strongly supports** HB2454. 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**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 8:12:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/24/2018 3:13:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
E. Ileina Funakoshi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for this win-win legislation which will help the prisoners as well as Hawai`i Correctional Industries.

By providing the prisoners' a trade, their chances to obtain jobs increases and so does their outlook in life. How wonderful.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 6:40:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support former inmate employment

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 10:28:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 7:26:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the House Committee on Finance.

I am in strong support of HB2454 that would provide a pilot employment program for former inmates. The recidivism rate is so high in Hawaii that an ACO told me on Friday 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. Although this is a small and short-term project, it is a step in the right direction, and in the long run, will save the State money by breaking the cycle of recidivism that fills our jails and prisons.

I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO PASS THIS BILL.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 10:20:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 10:33:54 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

This bill is crucial for building up our communities



**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 10:43:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 3:53:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 9:46:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

**LATE**

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

Comments:

We continue to STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill. Mahalo.

**LATE**

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/27/2018 8:44:54 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jun Shin	Young Progressives Demanding Action - Hawaii	Support	No

Comments: