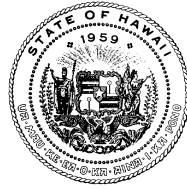


HB 1416 HD 1

Measure Title:	RELATING TO HEALTH.
Report Title:	Suicide Prevention Commission; Department of Health; Corrections
Description:	Establishes a Suicide Prevention Commission to develop a strategic plan to reduce suicides within Hawaii's correctional system. (HB1416 HD1)
Companion:	
Package:	None
Current Referral:	CPH/PSM, WAM
Introducer(s):	MIZUNO, BELATTI, BROWER, CABANILLA ARAKAWA, CACHOLA, CREAGAN, DECOITE, HASHIMOTO, B. KOBAYASHI, D. KOBAYASHI, C. LEE, LOWEN, MCKELVEY, MORIKAWA, NAKASHIMA, OHNO, PERRUSO, QUINLAN, SAIKI, SAN BUENAVENTURA, SAY, TAKUMI, TARNAS, TOKIOKA, WARD, WILDBERGER



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 1416 H.D. 1
RELATING TO HEALTH**

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

SENATOR CLARENCE K. NISHIHARA, CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY
AFFAIRS

Hearing Date: March 19, 2019

Room Number: 229

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health estimates approximately \$12,000 would be
2 needed for research, facilitation, and Neighbor Island commission member travel. The
3 Department defers to the priorities in the Governor's Executive biennium budget request.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health supports the intent of H.B. 1416 H.D. 1.
5 The purpose of H.B.1416 H.D. 1 is to establish a suicide prevention commission to examine,
6 evaluate, and determine methods to improve education, awareness, support services, and inmate
7 outreach to best prevent suicides in Hawaii's correctional facilities. The commission will submit
8 a report and strategic plan 20 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2020.

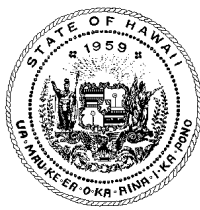
9 In response to HCR 66, passed by the 2016 Legislature, the plan to reduce suicides in Hawaii by
10 25% by 2025 was completed by the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force (PSHTF) in
11 collaboration with the Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch
12 (EMSIPSB). One of the plan's key goal is to increase knowledge of discrimination and stigma
13 in the context of mental health and suicide prevention with marginalized and/or vulnerable
14 communities such as prison inmates.

15 According to the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), Hawaii's inmate suicide rate was the
16 seventh highest in the nation with 390 suicide deaths per 100,000 in the period 2001 – 2014.

- 1 Establishing a time-limited subcommittee with representative membership tasked with a strategic
- 2 plan, will give greater visibility and weight to addressing the problem of suicide in Hawaii's
- 3 correctional facilities.

- 4 Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor
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NOLAN P. ESPINDA
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Renee R. Sonobe Hong
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1416, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO HEALTH.

by
Nolan P. Espinda, Director
Department of Public Safety

LATE

Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

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

Tuesday, March 19, 2019; 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Chairs Baker and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Chang and Wakai, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports House Bill (HB) 1416, House Draft (HD) 1, which would establish a suicide prevention commission to research and recommend methods for preventing suicides in Hawaii's correctional facilities. PSD has no objection to the changes in commission composition proposed in HB 1416, HD 1.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1416, HD 1

TO: Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection & Health
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental & Military Affairs

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Grants, Development & Policy Manager

DATE: March 19, 2019 (9 AM)

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and Committee Members:
Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Wakai, and Committee Members:

Hawai`i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) supports SB 1416, which would establish a suicide prevention commission to examine, evaluate, and determine methods to improve education, awareness, support services, and inmate outreach to best prevent suicides in Hawaii's correctional facilities.

The state has an obligation to ensure the life, health, and well-being of those in correctional custody. Of particular concern is the overuse of segregation, which exacerbates pre-existing mental health conditions. Segregation has negative emotional, cognitive, behavioral impacts for those without pre-existing mental health conditions, and these impacts can impact functioning after release from segregation and from incarceration.

The Department of Public Safety disclosed to the HCR 85 Corrections Reform Task Force that three-quarters of those in jail or prison are incarcerated for Class C felonies or lower. The continued incarceration of individuals who pose low safety risks to the community is costly, ineffective, and injurious to individual and public health.

HHRC works with many individuals who are impacted by social determinants of health. Many face challenges related to substance use and mental health. Protracted involvement in the criminal justice system for those who are more suited for care within a therapeutic model is neither wise nor compassionate public policy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / kat.caphi@gmail.com



COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair

Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Clarence Nishihara, Chair

Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

9:00 am

Room 016

STRONG SUPPORT - HB 1416 HD1 - SUICIDE PREVENTION COMMISSION FOR CORRECTIONS

Aloha Chairs Baker and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Chang and Wakai 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 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 more than 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 1416 HD1 amends the representation on the 13-member Suicide Prevention Commission per the Department of Health's recommendations.

Community Alliance on Prisons is in strong support and thanks the committee for hearing this important bill. HB 1416 HD1 establishes a Suicide Prevention Commission to examine, evaluate, and determine methods to improve education, awareness, support services, and inmate outreach to best prevent suicides in Hawaii's correctional facilities. We have been working on justice issues for more than two decades and we have never seen the number of suicides or attempted suicides that we have witnessed over the last several years.

Suicides of incarcerated persons have raised particular concerns in recent years, with 26 inmates committing suicide between 2010 and October 2018, according to information from the Department of Public Safety. Nine of the suicides occurred between 2016 and 2017.

Sadly, the Department of Public Safety has consistently asserted that there is nothing wrong with its suicide prevention policies or staff training. Recent deaths "have been or are being investigated by the Department of Public Safety", but to our knowledge no outside experts have been consulted.

As the bill states, the Department of Justice ranked Hawai'i 7th in the nation for suicides among incarcerated individuals. This report was issued before the rash of suicides and attempted suicides since 2017. Therefore, we are heartened that this bill places the Suicide Prevention Commission within the Department of Health for administrative purposes since the Department of Public Safety has shown that they are incapable of addressing all the preventable deaths from suicide in their facilities.

In 2017 CNN reported¹ that Suicide rates in prisons are rising

- After holding steady for years, suicide rates started rising sharply in 2013.
- In state prisons, it went up 30% from 2013 to 2014.
- In 2014, there were 3,927 inmate deaths in state (3,483) and federal (444) prisons, the largest number of inmate deaths reported since tracking began in 2001. Although illness remained the most common cause of death, **suicides represented 7%. That's the largest percentage of deaths due to suicide since tracking began.**

An [international study](#),² conducted with Professors Seena Fazel and Keith Hawton at the University of Oxford, shows the increased risk of suicide for men and women in prison, compared to the general population, in 24 high-income countries between 2011–2014. The study found that the **risk of suicide increased at least three-fold for male prisoners** compared to the general male population. For females, this risk was amplified, **with female prisoners being at least nine times more likely to die from suicide** compared to the general female population.

In 2007, the World Health Organization released a report entitled, PREVENTING SUICIDE IN JAILS AND PRISONS³ including a summary of best practices:

First of all, staff culture and cooperation seem to be critical to the successful implementation of prison suicide prevention programmes. Best practices for preventing suicides in jail and prison settings are based on the development and documentation of a comprehensive suicide prevention plan with the following elements:

- *A training programme (including refreshers) for correctional staff and care givers to help them recognize suicidal inmates and appropriately respond to inmates in suicidal crises.*
- *Attention needs to be paid to the general prison environment (levels of activity, safety, culture and staff-prisoner relationships). In particular, the quality of the social climate of prisons is critical in minimizing suicidal behaviours. While prisons can never be stress-free environments, prison administrators must enact effective strategies for minimizing bullying and other violence in their institutions, and for maximizing supportive relationships among prisoners and staff. The quality of staff-prisoner relationships is critical in reducing prisoners' stress levels and maximizing the likelihood that prisoners will trust staff sufficiently to disclose to them when their coping resources are becoming overwhelmed, feelings of hopelessness, and suicidal ideation.*

¹ **Prison suicides are on the rise nationally and it's pretty bad in Massachusetts**, By Emanuella Grinberg, CNN, Wed April 19, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/04/19/health/prison-suicides-massachusetts-trnd/index.html>

² 'Suicide in prisons: an international study of prevalence and contributory factors. [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(17\)30430-3/supplemental](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(17)30430-3/supplemental)

³ Preventing Suicide in Jails and Prisons, World Health Organization and the International Association for Suicide Prevention. https://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/resource_jails_prisons.pdf

- *Procedures to systematically screen inmates upon their arrival at the facility and throughout their stay in order to identify those who may be at high risk.*
- *A mechanism to maintain communication between staff members regarding high-risk inmates.*
- *Written procedures which outline minimum requirements for housing high-risk inmates; provision of social support; routine visual checks and constant observation for acutely suicidal inmates; and appropriate use of restraints as a last resort for controlling self-injurious inmates.*
- *Inmates with mental disorders in need of treatment should receive it (pharmacological or psychosocial interventions) and be kept under strict observation.*
- *Development of sufficient internal resources or links to external community-based mental health services to ensure access to mental health personnel when required for further evaluation and treatment.*
- *A strategy for debriefing when a suicide occurs towards identifying ways of improving suicide detection, monitoring, and management in correctional settings.*

In conclusion, although we sometimes lack the ability to accurately predict if and when an inmate will attempt or commit suicide, prison officials and correctional, health care, and mental health personnel are in the best position to identify, assess, and treat potentially suicidal behaviour. Even though not all inmate suicides are preventable, many are, and a systematic reduction of these deaths can occur if comprehensive suicide prevention programmes are implemented in correctional facilities throughout the world.

Community Alliance on Prisons implores the committee to pass this important legislation to establish a Suicide Prevention Commission to address this pressing issue that the Department has proven to be incapable of handling.

We need transparency and accountability of this department that is known to whitewash their “major mistakes”.

Every person incarcerated by the state is a member of our community. They are human beings, many of whom are contending with a host of public health and social challenges that could be addressed by a correctional system that actually practiced aloha and cared for the people in their custody.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify and support this bill!



ONLINE SUBMITTAL: March 18, 2019

HEARING March 19, 2019 9:00 a.m. in room 229

TO: [COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH](#)

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

[COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS](#)

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

FROM: Eva Andrade, President

RE: **Strong Support for HB 1416 HD 1 Relating to Health**

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening life, family and religious freedom in Hawaii. We are committed to defending the sanctity of human life from conception until natural death, and everything that comes between. We are very concerned about suicide, because it affects the vulnerable people in our community, especially our youth, elderly and those who are incarcerated.

A report to the 2018 Hawaii Legislature indicated that between 2012-2016, suicide was the most common cause of fatal injuries among Hawaii residents, accounting for one-quarter of all fatal injuries. The most striking statistic was that one person dies by suicide in Hawaii every two daysⁱ. People who have experienced trouble with law and end up in prison deserve to be treated with dignity. Suicide for them, should not be a solution.

Some media outlets reported that Hawaii's inmate suicide rate is the seventh highest in the country, according to Bureau of Justice statistics. Although the suicide rate for Hawai'i prisons varies from year to year, in the eight-month period between June 15, 2017, and January 20, 2018, there were five suicides at correctional facilities in Hawai'i.ⁱⁱ

Experts rightly point out that suicidal behaviors, for people of any age, are usually rooted in many different factors, with mental health issues playing an important role in the overall mix. It is a "perfect storm" of emotional issues and the only way to begin making a difference, is by identifying and treating each person. And the good news, is that it is fixable by awareness and treatment.

Establishing a Suicide Prevention Commission to develop a strategic plan to reduce suicides within Hawaii's correctional system and to provide accurate information to the wider community is an effort we applaud. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support!

ⁱ Hawaii Suicide Task Force Report, 2018

ⁱⁱ Letter from Nolan Espinda (Hawaii Department of Public Safety Director) to HCR 85 Task Force Chair Michael D. Wilson, March 6, 2018

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2019 1:35:24 PM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kalawai'a Goo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2019 7:20:14 PM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I don't have any solutions but we need to stop our youth from seeing suicide is a way out of their trouble or not having any support when in dire need.

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2019 6:37:43 AM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cathy Tilley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 9:59:08 AM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 11:57:25 AM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cindy Snow	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 1:36:01 PM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Steven Melling	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 5:08:46 PM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dr Marion Ceruti	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 8:39:49 PM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
SUSAN P HUGHES	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 8:53:48 AM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brandon Allen Kainoa Leong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 11:00:21 PM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carrie Ann Shirota	Testifying for Hawai'i Justice Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

LATE

Hawai'i Justice Coalition is comprised of organizations and individuals 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 promotes public safety, makes responsible use of our resources, and builds healthy communities.

Given the high rates of suicide in Hawaii's correctional facilities compared to other jurisdictions, and the recognition that best practices can reduce and often eliminate suicides behind bars, we support HB 1416 as it would create a 13-member commission composed of experts on suicide prevention to be placed within the department of health for administrative purposes. The suicide prevention commission shall examine, evaluate, and determine methods to improve education, awareness, support services, and inmate outreach to best prevent suicides in Hawaii's correctional facilities.

Please pass this measure!

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2019 3:20:15 AM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

LATE

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 STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS BILL. HOWEVER, THIS BILL MUST HAVE MANDATORY LANGUAGE THAT WILL REQUIRE PSD TO FULLY COMPLY, WITH CLEAR SANCTIONS IF THE DEPARTMENT FAILS TO COMPLY. OTHERWISE THIS BILL WILL BECOME JUST ANOTHER TOOTHLESS BILL, WHICH THE DEPARTMENT WILL IGNORE OR ONLY PAY LIP SERVICE TO SUPPORTING.

HB-1416-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 4:51:32 PM

Testimony for CPH on 3/19/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Fukuzawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

Dear Honorable Legislative Members,

I am in full support of this bill. As a retired Dept of Public Safety employee, I am in total agreement with the concept of this bill.

Sincerely,

David Fukuzawa