



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII
The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and
Military Affairs
Wednesday, February 2, 2022, at 10:00 A.M.
Via Videoconference**

RE: HB 1650 Relating to Offender Reentry

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** HB 1650, which Appropriates funds for a program named Project Reset which will help prisoners with reentry, rehabilitation, employment, and housing post-sentence.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Project Reset and other reentry programs are vital to the success of recently released people in our state. Obtaining post-release housing, transportation, and other assistance is needed to have the chance to obtain employment. By obtaining employment, recently released individuals are not only helping themselves get back on their feet, but helps their families, their community, and the economy of the state.

One of the biggest roadblocks to employment of recently released individuals is that they do not have the necessary support to even think about obtaining employment and bettering their lives. By passing this bill and supporting Project Reset, the state is taking a step in the right direction to ensuring that recently released people have the support they need to reenter society and contribute to making their community a better place.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

STATE OF HAWAI‘I
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender,
State of Hawai‘i to the House Committee on
Corrections, Military & Veterans**

February 2, 2022

H.B. No. 1650: RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender supports H.B. No. 1650.

An informal group brought together by the Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki and identified as the Ending Homelessness Group (“EHG”), representing twenty-plus representatives from eleven state, county, and non-profit agencies (including the Office of the Public Defender), has been meeting since June 2021 to discuss problems and difficulties in ending (or at least reducing) homelessness and in finding solutions to prevent and end homelessness. The EHG came up with many different proposals to meet gaps in housing, enforcement, and treatment/system flow. One such solution is to establish Project Reset.

Project Reset will address a category of homeless which is problematic for the community: inmates released from incarceration. This group can include individuals who were homeless prior to their arrest as well as those who lost their housing while incarcerated. The attorneys at our office know that their homeless clients have the best chance of success when released directly into a treatment program, but not everyone will have access to those resources. There are not enough beds available for every inmate that qualifies for early release to a program. Furthermore, coordinating inmate release to treatment programs has been extremely difficult during the pandemic due to quarantine and social distancing requirements at programs as well as numerous outbreaks at our correctional facilities. Inmates can spend their entire jail sentence waiting for release to a program before simply being released on felony probation.

Although inmates released on parole benefit from the work furlough program prior to release, there is no work furlough program for inmates sentenced to felony probation. There is also no work furlough option for sentenced misdemeanants and

those who serve out their maximum prison term. These unlucky inmates are often released from custody with no money, no identification, no housing, no food, no bus pass, and no phone. Due to the lack of comprehensive programs that focus on transitioning them through the processes of reentry, rehabilitation, employment, and housing, they either immediately join the homeless upon release or shortly thereafter.

Currently, homeless individuals are passed off from specialty to specialty, but there is no one to help them navigate to a stable life in the community. It is a complex process, especially for one incarcerated for an extended period of time; they need help getting a job, getting an identification card to get a job, finding housing, learning new technology, etc. Currently, individuals who leave extended periods of incarceration for parole or time served move immediately to homeless encampments. These individuals need to be supported prior to release to give them the best chance of reentry. Maximizing the pre-release time to get an individual the necessary assistance would reduce the likelihood of them becoming homeless and reoffending.

Reentry programs are the best unused weapon that we have against recidivism. A reentry program would divert the ex-offender from homelessness and reoffending. While there are programs that assist with certain phases of transition, there is no coordination to help incarcerated individuals through the entire complex process. What is missing is a coordinator/guide who will work with the inmate *prior to* and *after* release in creating a plan to guide them into housing and work programs. Such a program would minimize the likelihood of released inmates becoming homeless once released.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.B. No. 1650.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, AND VETERANS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1650

February 2, 2022
10:00 a.m.
Room 430 and Videoconference

RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1650 establishes the Project Reset program within the Department of Human Services (DHS) to assist individuals exiting correctional facilities in securing post-release housing and appropriates \$375,000 in general funds to DHS in FY 23 for the implementation and administration of the program.

B&F notes that the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

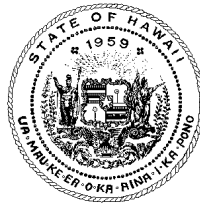
Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

MAX N. OTANI
DIRECTOR

Maria C. Cook
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No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1650
RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY.

by
Max N. Otani, Director
Department of Public Safety

House Committee on Corrections, Military, and Veterans
Representative Takashi Ohno, Chair
Representative Sonny Ganaden, Vice Chair

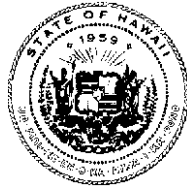
Wednesday, February 2, 2022; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol; Video Conference

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) has reviewed House Bill (HB) 1750, which seeks to establish and fund a new project to be named, "Project Reset", with the purpose of overseeing the development and implementation of comprehensive post-release housing programs to assist offenders transitioning back to the community. The new "Project Reset" will be administered by the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness and placed administratively within the Department of Human Services (DHS).

PSD supports HB 1650 and pledges to work closely with the Governor's Homelessness Coordinator and DHS on this initiative.

Thank you for the opportunity submit testimony on HB 1650.



**STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**

February 1, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Takashi Ohno, Chair
Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair, Hawaii Correctional System Oversight
Commission

SUBJECT: **HB1650 Relating to offender Reentry**

POSITION: Support

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden and Members of the Committee

The Hawaii Corrections System Oversight Commission was created by Act 179, SLH 2019, to provide independent oversight over our correctional system. The Commission's statutory responsibilities include monitoring and reviewing the comprehensive offender reentry program of the Department of Public Safety and ensuring that the comprehensive offender reentry system under chapter 353H is working properly to provide programs and services that result in the timely release of inmates on parole. [See Hawaii Revised Statutes 353L-3(b).]

Nationally an estimated 25 to 50 percent of people experiencing homelessness also have a history of incarceration. This overlap poses challenges for communities' efforts to engage and assist people experiencing homelessness and to end homelessness. In addition to being costly, criminalization can impede communities' attempts to prevent and end homelessness. Arresting a person for actions associated with homelessness rather than providing them with necessary health care and other services can exacerbate health and behavioral health problems. Further, criminal records result in barriers to housing and other services upon release, making it harder for people to become stable members of our communities.

We support the bill as it is aligned with our mandate for population control, monitoring and supporting a comprehensive re-entry program within the Department of Public Safety.

Offenders stand a better success rate of recidivism should they be afforded housing opportunities prior to release. This would lead to better transitional planning and economic stability.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

February 3, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Takashi Ohno, Chair
House Committee on Corrections, Military, and Veterans

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **HB 1650 – RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY.**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 2, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports the intent of this measure and respectfully offers comments. The Coordinator defers to the Department of Public Safety.

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator requests that its passage does not adversely impact priorities indicated in the executive budget request.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to appropriate \$375,000 for fiscal year 2022-2023 for a program named Project Reset, which will help prisoners with reentry, rehabilitation, employment, and housing post-sentence.

The Coordinator acknowledges the importance of reentry programs that support individuals exiting the jail and prison systems with services including housing and employment. In 2017, as part of the Coordinated Statewide Homelessness Initiative (CSHI), Aloha United Way funded a report, [*Touchpoints on Homelessness: institutional Discharged as a Window of Opportunity for Hawaii's Homeless*](#), that estimated 25-50% of individuals experiencing homelessness have a history of incarceration.¹ The report also recommended that strategies to support successful reentry include providing more comprehensive pre-release assistance from

¹ Report available at: <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Touchpoints-of-Homelessness-Report-Final.pdf>

jail or prison, providing predictability and basic necessities as part of the jail or prison release process, and providing and encouraging jail or prison access for social service providers to work with inmates before release.

According to homeless service providers, it is challenging to locate housing or employment for individuals released from jail and prison because many individuals lack identification documents, such as government-issued identification (ID), birth certificate, or social security card. The 2017 *Touchpoints on Homelessness* report also describes similar challenges. In addition, according to the Department of Public Safety's (DPS) [2021 Reentry Coordination Office Annual Report on Civil Identification Documents](#),² the lack of identification documents continues to be a challenge for individuals leaving jail and prison. For example, the 2021 PSD report shared that between November 30, 2019, and September 30, 2020, 432 individuals exited prison without an ID card, and 246 individuals exited jail without an ID card. Accordingly, there is concern that Project Reset may be unsuccessful without additional focused efforts before release that concentrate on increasing the number of individuals exiting jail and prison with identification documents.

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator suggests Project Reset be expanded to include services provided before release, and that these services are coordinated with the work of the DPS Reentry Coordination Office to increase efficiency, minimize duplication of effort, and ensure access to provide services within corrections facilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

² Report available at: <https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Reentry-Coordination-Report-on-ID-Documents-Act-56-SLH-2017-210421.pdf>

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
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FIRST DEPUTY
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



**THE HONORABLE TAKASHI OHNO, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY,
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS
Thirty-first State Legislature
Regular Session of 2022
State of Hawai`i**

February 1, 2022

RE: H.B. 1650; RELATING TO OFFENDER ENTRY.

Chair Ohno, Vice-Chair Ganaden and members of the House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu (“Department”) submits the following testimony in support of H.B. 1650.

The purpose of H.B. 1650 is to establish and fund a program—Project Reset—to oversee the development and implementation of a housing program specifically designed to assist offenders exiting correctional facilities. Project Reset would assist inmates through the process of reentry, rehabilitation, employment and housing.

The Department strongly believes that minimizing recidivism is a key component to ensuring public safety for Hawaii in the long run, and supports the concept of “wraparound services” for a holistic and comprehensive approach to offender reentry. Proper coordination of services, steady employment and stable housing will undoubtedly assist offenders who are transitioning back into society, by equipping them to live as contributing, law-abiding citizens.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu supports passage of H.B. 1650. Thank for you the opportunity to testify on this matter.



SHB1650 Project Reset Offender Housing Reentry
COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, & VETERANS

Rep. Takashi Ohno, Chair

Rep. Sonny Ganaden, Vice Chair

Tuesday, Feb 2 2022: 10:00 am : Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB1650:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies.

HSAC supports and recommends adding valid screening and assessments to guide the development of reentry plans that would include various levels of treatment and address criminality issues.

HSAC hopes that the services will become more comprehensive for Project Reset, which will provide comprehensive programs to assist inmates through the process of reentry, rehabilitation, employment, and housing.

1. **For offenders with lower substance use** and either low or high functioning, it is preferable to start with housing and add services especially case management if needed for any behavioral health issue such as substance misuse or mental health disorders. Any needed substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder treatments would be best to include programming that addresses criminality issues. Medication management would be considered.
2. **For offenders with heavy use substance use** and either low or high functionality, abstinence-based treatment is essential for what works according to research from the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), the definitive body of science for levels of care. The more chronic substance abuse, especially for addiction, would be best to start at residential or if less severe, start at outpatient treatment. Treatments would also address criminality and include medications if needed.
 - a. If residential, start first and then move to housing.
 - b. If outpatient, then start at housing and include outpatient.
3. **Using nationally standardized screening and assessment tools are essential to develop appropriate reentry plans to determine an integrated approach for reentry:**

- a. that incorporates residential or outpatient treatment as part of housing or
- b. if substance abuse treatment is not needed, then integrate recovery-oriented services as part of housing, such as case management or medication management.
- c. Vocational is key for long-term rehabilitation.
- d. It is important that parole and probation are involved in every step with service providers.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for further questions.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1650

TO: Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden, & Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Grants & Advancement Manager

DATE: February 2, 2022 (10:00 AM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** HB 1650, which establishes and funds Project Reset to oversee the development and implementation of comprehensive post-release housing programs to assist with transition from carceral facilities back into the community under the Governor's Homelessness Coordinator.

Ideally, the Department of Public Safety would engage in pre-release planning to facilitate identity documents as well as linkage to housing opportunities, medical care, and other available government support. However, current practice is to leave those released without adequate support which dramatically increases the likelihood of joining the ranks of the unsheltered homeless.

The continued absence of bail reform, sentencing reform, and probation reform sets the stage for perennially overcrowded jails. The Department of Public Safety relayed a critical data point to the [HCR 85 Prison Reform Task Force, which published its final report in January 2019: only 26% of the combined jail and prison population is incarcerated for class A or B felony, while the remaining 74% are incarcerated for a class C felony or lower \(misdemeanor, petty misdemeanor, technical offense, or violation\)](#). The continued criminalization of persons who use drugs contributes to overcrowding and perpetuates lasting social, medical, and legal stigma. Over-incarceration is exacerbated by [Hawai'i having the longest average term of probation in the nation](#) (59 months).

HHRC Executive Director Heather Lusk currently serves as Board Chair of [Partners in Care O'ahu](#), a planning, coordinating, and advocacy alliance that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill needs within O'ahu's continuum of care for homeless persons.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions. Many of our program clients and participants have also been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.