

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Ka 'Oihana Ho'opalekana Lehulehu
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Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON
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Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 451
RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.

By
Tommy Johnson, Director

House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Friday, February 10, 2023; 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 430 and Via Video Conference

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) strongly supports House Bill (HB) 451 which proposes to extend the time to expend appropriations for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa Correctional Facility on Oahu pursuant to Act 125, Session Laws 2022.

PSD respectfully requests that there be further discussions within the working group led by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to confirm the approximate additional funding needed for this worthwhile project.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony on HB 451.



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
(808) 587-4160

TO: The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair
The Honorable Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair
Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: House Bill 451, Relating to Incarcerated Individuals
Hearing: Friday, February 10, 2023; 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 430

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The Commission **strongly supports** HB 451, which would extend the life of funds appropriated in 2022 to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa Correctional Facility. This Bill would also appropriate additional funds for additional improvements at the visitation and resource center.

The Hawaii Correctional 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).]

Families play a crucial role in the rehabilitation of inmates. As such any network of transitional services must include meaningful reconnection with families, particularly if the inmate has children. It is difficult to have meaningful reconnection unless the families are allowed to have face-to-face contact in a suitable setting. Waiawa is an appropriate facility for this program, as most of its inmates are transferred from the Halawa Correctional Facility or the Saguaro Correctional Facility in Arizona, where there is precious little opportunity for face-to-face interaction between inmate fathers and their children. Moreover, the challenges facing children of the incarcerated are well-documented. A visitation and resource center would help children deal with the trauma caused by parental incarceration.

We urge you your favorable consideration of this bill.

Should you have additional questions, the Oversight Coordinator, Christin Johnson, can be reached at 808-900-2200 or at christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, & VETERANS

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Friday, February 10, 2023

Room 430

9:00 AM

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 451 - FAMILY VISITING & RESOURCE CENTER

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun 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 4,074 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the “care and custody” of the Department of Public Safety/Corrections and Rehabilitation on any given day. We are always mindful that 964 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.

Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 451 that extends the time to expend appropriations for the establishment of the Family Visiting & Resource Center at Waiawa Correctional Facility, makes conforming amendments related to the establishment of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; and appropriates additional funds to implement the pilot Family Visiting and Family Resource Center at Waiawa Correctional Facility on Oahu.

HB 451 ensures that the funds appropriated for Act 125 will not lapse and appropriates additional funds for the Center’s renovations as well as an ADA-compliant restroom in or near the building being renovated – an important addition to Center that will have families and children visiting their loved ones.

HB 451 continues the partnership with the Department of Human Services and the Family Reunification Working Group to create a Family Visitation and Resource Center at Waiawa Correctional Facility that was stalled because of COVID.

¹ Department of Public Safety, Weekly Population Report, January 30, 2023.

https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2023-01-23_George-King.pdf

Maintaining the connections of families and loved ones has been proven by 50 years of research. Visitation, mail, phone, and other forms of contact between incarcerated people and their families have positive impacts for everyone – including better health, reduced recidivism, and improvement in school.

The positive effects of visitation have been well-known for decades – particularly when it comes to reducing recidivism. A 1972 study on visitation that followed 843 people on parole from California prisons found that those who had no visitors during their incarceration were six times more likely to be reincarcerated than people with three or more visitors. A few years later, researchers found similar results in a study of people paroled from Hawai'i facilities.²

This Center facilitates connections with families and their incarcerated loved ones, an important part of a person's rehabilitation. It will be providing games and toys for families to play together to create some sense of normalcy for families.

There is probably no area of greater consensus in the field than regarding the effects of paternal incarceration on children's behavioral and mental health problems. Although no one dataset is ideally suited to consider these effects, and obstacles to causal inference remain, research using a range of datasets ties paternal incarceration to greater behavioral and mental health problems in children. Although there is evidence for both externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems, evidence regarding externalizing and physically aggressive behaviors tends to be the strongest; it also tends to suggest that male children are more affected in this domain than female children.

These behavioral and mental health indicators are tightly linked with school readiness, and, as a result, it is perhaps unsurprising that children with incarcerated fathers are less prepared to enter school than their peers. Yet children of incarcerated fathers face even more impediments to thriving in educational institutions after they set foot in the classroom. Having been incarcerated promotes withdrawal from educational institutions on the part of their parents. In conjunction with the stigma attached to paternal incarceration in the eyes of teachers, this leaves children of incarcerated fathers in triple jeopardy in schools – unprepared, with disengaged parents, and carrying the stigma of paternal incarceration. Given the strikes against them, it is no great surprise that children with incarcerated fathers are more likely to be held back in school, have lower cognitive functioning in middle childhood than their peers, and perform more poorly on a range of indicators of school success in high school.³

² Research roundup: The positive impacts of family contact for incarcerated people and their families, Leah Wang, December 21, 2021. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/12/21/family_contact/

³ Assessing mass incarceration's effects on families, HEDWIG LEE AND CHRISTOPHER WILDEMAN, SCIENCE • 14 Oct 2021 • Vol 374, Issue 6565 • pp. 277-281 • DOI: 10.1126/science.abj7777. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abj7777>

A 2014 study of incarcerated women found that those who had any phone contact with a family member were less likely to be reincarcerated within the five years after their release. In fact, phone contact had a stronger effect on recidivism compared to visitation, which the study also examined.

Of course, reduced recidivism is not the only benefit. A 2020 survey of incarcerated parents showed that **parent-child relationships improved** when they had frequent (weekly) phone calls.⁴

The Family Reunification Group is composed of community organization, families, and concerned community members who have been working on this issue for several years. The group was brought together by Blueprint for Change and the Department of Human Services and we have been working with the DHS and DPS to bring this to reality. The group issued a report that is available to review electronically at the Department's website:

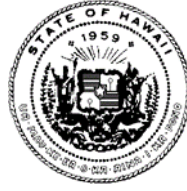
<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>.

Maintaining connections with loved ones *IS* a reentry strategy that helps ease the transition from institutional to community life and back to family. Children are especially impacted by the incarceration of a parent as noted in the research.

Community Alliance on Prisons urges the committee to pass this bill and recommend that the Finance committee provide adequate funding to get this project moving. COVID and the supply chain impacts have had a great impact and we are so close to making this Center a reality. This will be a shining star for Hawai`i nei. Taking care of families is part of our culture and this project will have long-lasting benefits for everyone!

⁴ See FN 1

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 8, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
House Committee on Military & Veterans

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 451 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.**

Hearing: Friday, February 10, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 430 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and defers to the Public Safety Department (PSD) on relevant parts.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to amend Act 125, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, to extend the time to expend appropriations for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu, and make conforming amendments related to the establishment of the department of corrections and rehabilitation; and to appropriate additional funds to implement the pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu.

The Act 129 and family resource center working group met in July 2022 to celebrate the passage of Act 125, Relating To Children And Family Of Incarcerated Individuals, and Act 129, Relating to Family Resource Centers. In addition, the working group discussed how family resource centers connect the two Acts and sought pathways for further collaboration.

DHS requested the release of appropriate funds from the Department of Budget & Finance, which is pending. In addition, PSD requested the release of appropriated funds for Waiawa Correctional Facility and received approval for draft plans and other building materials for the child visiting center and family resource center. However, the final design is incomplete, and only renovations to the existing building are currently planned.

The working group met again in November 2022. Participants requested a virtual site visit to an existing resource center at another correctional facility. The group met virtually with the New Hampshire Prisons Family Connections Center staff in January 2023. The group reviewed Waiawa child visiting center renderings and determined additional renovations to include an Americans Disability Act (ADA) compliant restroom with a diaper changing station, modular structures, air conditioning, and IT infrastructure for Internet/Wi-Fi 5G access. These additional requests were not included in the initial request for appropriations.

In October 2022, DHS Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division (BESSD) posted a Request for Information (RFI) on home visiting programs and services to address adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) of parents with young children, which specifically included services provided to families with incarcerated parent(s) at public correctional facilities. Unfortunately, BESSD did not receive any plan proposals through the end of the RFI period that ended in November 2022.

The Hawaii's Children Trust Fund sponsored a special training by Blueprint for Change entitled, "Pehea nā keiki? And How Are the Children?" Responding to the needs of children impacted by parental incarceration in November 2022 with Ann Adalist-Estrin, director of the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers University–Camden.

The working group is considering a Call to Action to explore opportunities for the community to help beautify the area around the building site at Waiawa, seeking an overhead cover for the outdoor play area. In addition, group participants discussed ways to help the caregiving parent deal with the emotional aspect of visiting an incarcerated individual, pre-visit preparations, debriefing, and referrals for emotional support or other services after the visit when the family is home. Participants also raised issues around visiting logistics and family waiting time. The caregiving parent must manage the infant or child during the long wait

before the visit. Sometimes, the wait times range from two to five hours. Depending on the age of the infant or child, drinks and snacks are needed, a place to store baby bottles or medication that needs refrigeration, and a way to heat milk for babies, if needed.

DHS will issue a Request for Information (RFI) to seek interested community-based or non-profit organizations that would serve children and families of incarcerated individuals at Waiawa and potentially be accessible elsewhere. This RFI will allow potential providers to explore work on a correctional facility as the PSD completes building renovations. Then, DHS will post a Request for Proposals (RFP) for potential bidders.

The Department of Human Services requests an appropriation of \$350,000 to operate and develop the program curriculum and, with PSD, facilitate relationships of children and families of incarcerated individuals, including funds to contract 3-4 full-time positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**Blueprint
FOR Change**

“Blueprint for Change develops and supports community-driven services that promote the well-being of children and families.”

TO: House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

FROM: Shayne Kukunaokalā Yoshimoto, Executive Director

RE: HB451 - RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Friday, February 10, 2023, 9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Shayne Kukunaokalā Yoshimoto. I am the Executive Director of Blueprint for Change, a non-profit organization with a strong track record for innovating and implementing effective support services that address the unique challenges facing Hawai'i's 'ohana. The organization's roots date back to 1994 when in response to a growingly overburdened Child Welfare System, the Hawai'i State Legislature created the Child Welfare Services Reform Task Force to develop a "Blueprint for reform in child protective services."

After several years of rigorous evaluation, the Committee finalized the core elements of the Neighborhood Place model. In 2000, Blueprint for Change (BFC) was formed and incorporated as a nonprofit organization to serve as the Department of Human Services, master contractor for Neighborhood Place services, and to continue the Committee's effort to improve the responsiveness of the State of Hawai'i – Child Welfare System.

By maintaining fluid relationships between state agencies, local service providers, and community advocates, Blueprint for Change, and the Neighborhood Place Partnership can significantly improve the responsiveness of the state's Child Welfare System while reducing instances of child abuse and neglect.

As part of the oversight of the (7) NP across the state, BFC collects Quarterly Activity Reports (QAR), which are designed to inform services, procedures, and practices moving forward. In 2013 the QAR showed a significant increase in services delivered to families impacted by incarceration. This led BFC to explore this issue further. Thus, the creation of the Family Reunification Working Group (FRWG).

The FRWG, which includes representatives from DHS, PSD, ACLU, Kamehameha Schools, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and several community-based non-profit organizations, gained support and interest through the Legislative Keiki Caucus and began meeting regularly to explore and advocate for solutions to problems encountered by children and families in the State who are affected by incarceration.

The following are reasons for STRONG SUPPORT OF HB451:

- Family-friendly visitation centers will encourage families to stay in frequent contact with their significant others who are incarcerated;
- National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society;
- Having the visitation centers staffed by social service professionals will provide families with opportunities to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, wrap-around services to address issues relating to poverty, etc;
- Visitation centers could also be staffed with kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners who could provide Native Hawaiian families with more relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices;
- The bill provides an opportunity to begin breaking the cycle of incarceration that is generational in some families;
- The bill provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to continue the conversation about how we break the cycle of incarceration and not only help families sustain themselves but also save the State millions of dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs; and
- The New Hampshire Prison Family Connection Centers hosted a virtual tour for the Act 125, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022 working group, which provided a great example of our possibilities here in Hawai'i.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB451. Mahalo ā nui loa for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Vonnell Ramos, President
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
Jefferson Gourley, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive
Director

Network Membership

Bay Clinic
Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i
Big Island Substance Abuse
Council
Bobby Benson Center
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i
Collins Consulting, LLC
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC `Ohana, Inc.
Family Programs Hawai`i
Family Support Hawai`i
Friends of the Children's Justice
Center of Maui
Get Ready Hawai`i
Hale Kipa, Inc.
Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.
Hawai`i Children's Action
Network
Hawai`i Health & Harm
Reduction Center
Ho`ola Na Pua
Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i
Ka Hale Pomaika`i
Kahi Mohala
Kokua Kalihi Valley
Kaua`i Planning and Action
Alliance
Maui Youth and Family Services
Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native
Hawaiian Health Care
Systems
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together
PHOCUSED
PFLAG – Kona, Big Island
Planned Parenthood of the
Great Northwest, Hawaii
Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana
Residential Youth Services
& Empowerment (RYSE)
Salvation Army Family
Intervention Services
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community
Center
The Catalyst Group

February 8, 2023

To: Representative Mark Hashem, Chair
And members of the Committee on Corrections, Military, and
Veterans

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 451 RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 451 Relating to Incarcerated Individuals.

Children of incarcerated parents experience grief and loss, similar to the experience of divorce or the death of a parent. Studies show that children of incarcerated parents are at increased risk of abuse or neglect, and more likely to have mental problems, and difficulty in school. Children of incarcerated parents are seven times more likely to enter the juvenile or adult correctional systems themselves. Regular visitation provides opportunities to sustain the parent-child bond while a parent is incarcerated, which can alleviate many of these problems.

Prisoners who have regular contact with their children benefit as well. They are less likely to violate prison rules and create trouble for prison authorities. They are more likely to take advantage of rehabilitation and educational opportunities while in prison. Regular contact with children increases the chances of successful reintegration into the community when a parent is released from prison.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Representative Hashem, Chair
Representative Chun, Vice Chair
House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans

Re: HB451, relating to incarcerated individuals
9:00 a.m., Feb. 10, 2023

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun and committee members:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of House Bill 451, relating to incarcerated individuals.**

Incarceration can have significant impacts on families and especially young children. Keiki whose parents are involved in the criminal justice system may face greater mental health, behavioral, education and economic hardships. The National Institute for Justice has noted children are better able to weather these difficulties if they have a strong support system. For some children, having sustained, positive connections with their incarcerated parents helps them build that strong support system. Correctional facilities can play an important role then in supporting children and their families. They can provide spaces that are family friendly to facilitate these more positive connections.

This bill helps continue the good work that has already begun. The visitation and family resource center will yield numerous positive outcomes. Frequent contact between incarcerated individuals and their families can help children build resilience. It can also help an incarcerated individual build their own resilience, reducing their likelihood of recidivism. The center will also help families build their own social network by connecting them to services, guidance, counseling and more.

We need HB451 to continue the conversations and work state and community partners have begun to break the intergenerational cycle of incarceration. **Please advance this important measure.**

Mahalo,

Ke'ōpū Reelitz
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



Papa Ola Lokahi
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

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House Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans

Senator Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Senator Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Friday, February 10, 2023, 9:00 AM, Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

RE: HB 451 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair San Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans,

Papa Ola Lōkahi testifies in **SUPPORT** of **HB 451** as we support efforts aimed at cultural and person-centered approaches to rehabilitating incarcerated people, for which Native Hawaiians are overrepresented. This measure provides the time necessary to bring the pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility to fruition. Resources such as these provide a pathway for incarcerated people to have consistent contact with their loved ones in an environment that encourages visitation with family and keiki.

‘Ohana is an integral part of a person’s support system, and facilitating these connections is essential to the health and well-being of the incarcerated and the entire family unit. Additionally, having a family-friendly visitation facility may also help reduce recidivism when incarcerated people re-enter society. Frequent contact throughout incarceration may also help to reduce anxiety and stress when people transition out of the carceral system.

Concurrent measures such as this and SB 310, which allow for the creation of the pilot visitation and family resource center, are needed to rehabilitate incarcerated people and reduce recidivism in our communities. Multiple approaches, such as these measures, are essential to address people’s needs holistically. Additionally, we would like to lift up that the lack of data on the needs of Native Hawaiians within the carceral system does not allow us to design programs and interventions further. We urge the legislature to consider how we can learn more about the needs of Native Hawaiians who are incarcerated, as this knowledge is essential to resolving Native Hawaiian representation in prisons.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of HB 451.

Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board, authorized by the federal Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, is charged with raising the health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, which we achieve through strategic partnerships, programs, and public policy.

HB-451

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 12:48:17 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/10/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristine Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 451.

Shy Helm, Program Specialist, Blueprint for Change

TO: House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans

RE: HB451 - RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

POSITION: **STRONG SUPPORT**

Friday, February 10, 2023, 9:00 AM

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and members of the committee:

The following are reasons for **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB451:

- In discussions with PSD, the renovation costs related to improving the designated Visiting and Resource Center site have increased significantly. An additional appropriation to PSD is necessary to renovate the Visiting and Resource Center site.
- Family-friendly visiting centers will encourage families to stay in frequent contact with their significant others who are incarcerated;
- National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society;
- Having the visiting centers staffed by social service professionals will provide families with opportunities to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, wrap-around services to address issues relating to poverty, etc.;
- Visiting centers could also be staffed with kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners who could provide Native Hawaiian families with more relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices;
- The bill provides an opportunity to begin breaking the cycle of incarceration that is generational in some families;
- The bill provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to continue the conversation about how we break the cycle of incarceration and not only help families sustain themselves but also save the State millions of dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs; and
- The State of California has successfully operated visiting centers like those being proposed by the bill for over thirty years. These centers are operated by a non-profit social service organization called Friends Outside.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB451. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

HB-451

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:01:14 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/10/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Polk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge the committee to pass HB451 to fund the completion of the pilot Family visitation and Resource Center at the Wahiawa jail. Family visitation is the most effective way to reduce recidivism and increase public safety. I only wonder why this is a pilot project at only one place!

LATE

HB-451

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 9:02:19 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/10/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diana Bethel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of HB451, which amends Act 125 (2022), in order to extend the time to expend appropriations for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu.

The ultimate goal of this project is to reduce Hawaii’s high rate of recidivism by strengthening family ties, i.e.,the social support networks that enable successful reentry back into our communities. Secondly, the center will provide assistance to families impacted by incarceration of a family member.

By helping the family manage such a drastic change in its economic status and family relationships, the family can remain intact and healthy enough to provide adequate support to the family member returning from prison. In addition, it will mitigate the devastating consequences that incarceration of a family member can have on the mental and physical health of both remaining spouse as well as the children, which too often leads to depression, antisocial behavior, and intergenerational incarceration.

A building at Waiawa to house the center will be renovated to provide all the necessary amenities required for the family visitation and resource center facility, including restrooms.

This pilot project will surely become a model for reducing Hawaii’s high rate of recidivism as well as for demonstrating a successful, and sadly so rare, example of department and true community collaboration.

Please pass HB451. Mahalo for your consideration.

Diana Bethel

Honolulu

Stephen K. Morse, MSW

TO: House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veteran Affairs

RE: HB451 - RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

LATE

Friday, February10, 2023, 9 AM

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun and members of the committee:

Having been a member of HCR 205, the working group that was established by the Legislature to help create the pilot project for the Waiawa Visitation Center, I want to first say mahalo nui loa to all of you on these committees who supported the creation of the pilot project in past sessions. Your support is much appreciated, and those of us on the working group believe it will lead to us breaking the cycle of incarceration in our State.

But, your support is still needed this session. In discussion with staff from the Department of Corrections during the interim, it has come to our attention that the renovation costs related to improving the designated Visiting and Resource Center site have increased significantly. An additional appropriation to PSD is necessary to renovate the Visiting and Resource Center site. HB 451 includes an appropriation that we believe is sufficient to cover the increase of cost that has occurred over the past year.

The bill also extends the life of the HCR 205 Working group which provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to continue the conversation about how we break the cycle of incarceration and not only help families sustain themselves but also save the State millions of dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB451. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

HB-451

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 6:12:10 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/10/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Peters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 9, 2023

Aloha,

My name is Malia Peters. I am a parent of a child whose father was incarcerated 25 years ago. I strongly support SB 310 relating to children and families of incarcerated individuals.

This year marks my twenty-fifth year when my life was forever changed when my husband (now ex-husband) committed a horrible crime sentencing him to a 20 year prison sentence, which left my three-year-old son and I very abruptly in a very difficult situation. While we understood the severity of his crime and prison sentence, we've had a long and challenging road ever since. Helping families of prisoners who are left behind has become a passion in my life, encouraging them that they too can overcome these challenging situations. My testimony is simply because I would like to make the road less tough, so that our state and society can have a better chance of decreasing the cycle of incarceration.

Many of you have seen me grow up, transform, and have watched me testify on this matter for YEARS! I am beyond happy to see that FINALLY, something is being done to support these families.

While I wish this were going to be offered at OCCC, or Halawa - to be accessible to families at the time of incarceration, I'm grateful it will be somewhere and available as a much needed, and long-awaited resource.

We're still struggling to obtain data - how many children in Hawaii are actually impacted by incarceration. We only have estimates and many attempts to obtain this information have failed or the attempt has never been important enough sadly.

Having been through this personally, I can tell you first-hand how difficult this experience was for my son and I. I never wanted to ask for help for fear that I would minimize the horrible crime that my husband had committed, and/or offend the victim and their family. I also didn't ask for help because I was embarrassed to share why my husband was incarcerated. I was afraid that what he did would be a reflection on me and my own character. When I became desperate enough to seek assistance, I didn't know where to turn, and when I did try to apply for various types of assistance, we didn't qualify because I was working. My single income however was

not sustainable to support my son and I, which forced me to take a second job. My son now lost both his parents, had emotional anxieties, became mute, and we had no medical coverage to get him the emotional support he needed. It was a horrible thing to go through and it is only by the grace of God, the family I was blessed with, that I am able to stand strong today, with my son grown and by my side, sharing my story with each of you.

I cannot emphasize enough how much support at the initial time of and throughout incarceration could have made a tremendous difference for us. Waiting until they are about to be released to try to re-engage them with their families is too late. The time of incarceration was the most difficult. Countless hours are spent wastefully getting to the prison early to get your place in line and then waiting to be processed and granted entrance for our visit. It would be so productive to have a Visitation Center that could provide counseling services, resources to direct assistance, in addition to an area that provides educational toys, books, ipads etc. so that adults and children of various ages can pass the time in a positive, productive way with both receiving comfort and support simultaneously in a very intentional environment.

Without these basic wrap-around services and support that a Visitation Center could provide, we will not be able to provide hope and opportunity to implement something new to work with and hopefully decrease this unique population. We need to reduce the cycle of incarceration and we should do whatever we can to seek out new opportunities to do so.

Mahalo nui to each of you for your service, and for your consideration of this letter of support.

With much aloha and blessings,

Malia Peters

LATE

HB-451

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 6:33:04 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/10/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelyn Reyno Yeomans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support for HB451.