



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

February 10, 2022

TO: Honorable Senator Clarence Nishihara, Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military
Affairs

Honorable Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Service

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

SUBJECT: **SB 2306, RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED
INDIVIDUALS**

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

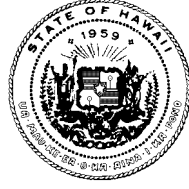
Chairs Nishihara and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs DeCoite and Ihara, and Members
of the Committee:

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).]

The Commission strongly supports SB 2306, which would create a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa Correctional Facility. 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. 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.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 9, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2306 – RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED
INDIVIDUALS.**

Hearing: February 10, 2022, 1:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, offer comments, and defers to the Department of Public Safety.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill requires the Department of Human Services to work with the Department of Public Safety to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility. Appropriates funds.

Improving contacts and relationships between children and families with their incarcerated parents at the Waiawa facility will benefit multiple generations and are the first steps to improve the child's and family's overall well-being and the incarcerated individuals' return to society.

Here is a link to the HCR 205/SCR7 (2019) Report to the Legislature:

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Visiting-Centers-at-all-State-Correctional-Facilities.pdf>. The workgroup participants worked collaboratively over the summer of 2019 to address this long-standing and important social issue.

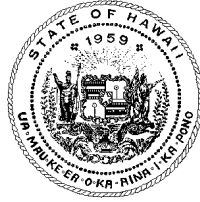
The department is committed to a multigenerational approach to ending poverty in Hawaii. It is well known that growing up with an incarcerated parent is an adverse early childhood experience that has a long-lasting impact on children into adulthood. DHS will continue to work with family members, community stakeholders, members and staff of the Legislature, the Office of Youth Services (OYS), the Department of Public Safety, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and other interested parties. It will take a committed community effort to address root causes to reduce the impact of incarceration on Hawaii's children and families, especially native Hawaiian families who are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation of general funds not replace budget priorities identified in the Executive Budget. It will take sustained investment by the Legislature to support this ongoing work to build a comprehensive and successful evidence-based approach to support families involved and impacted by the justice system.

We also ask for the Legislature's support for DHS administration measure SB3111/HB2143 Relating to Family Resource Centers. DHS, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and community providers are partnering to pilot a family resource centers network of school- and community-based family resource centers. If both measures pass, the Waiawa family resource center will be a part of the broader network of family resource centers. Family Resource Centers aim to provide support and services to families in familiar settings of their schools and communities, with people they trust.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
1177 Alakea Street, 6th Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

MAX N. OTANI
DIRECTOR

Maria C. Cook
Deputy Director
Administration

Tommy Johnson
Deputy Director
Corrections

Jordan Lowe
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2306
RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.

by
Max N. Otani, Director

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

Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

February 10, 2022; 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Via Video conference

Chair Nishihara, Chair Buenaventura, and Members of Both Committees:

Senate Bill (SB) 2306, seeks to require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to work with the Department of Public Safety (PSD) to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa Correctional Facility (WCF), and appropriates \$150,000.00 for fiscal year 2022 to 2023 for this purpose.

PSD supports the intent of SB 2306 and seeks clarification regarding the details of the total \$150,000 appropriation and whether it may be sufficient for the project's purpose. The Department also points out that its current budget does not have the necessary funding to support this initiative. Therefore, PSD respectfully requests that there be further discussion with the proponents and DHS to clarify the initial and subsequent annual costs needed to begin and maintain this worthwhile project.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 2306.

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
P.O. BOX 150
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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 SENATE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL,
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS AND HUMAN SERVICES
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2306

February 10, 2022
1:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference

RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

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

Senate Bill No. 2306: 1) requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to continue to lead the Family Reunification Working Group (FRWG) and work with the Department of Public Safety and other stakeholders to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa Correctional Facility; 2) sets operating requirements for the pilot center and reporting requirements for FRWG; 3) provides FRWG exemption from Chapter 92, HRS; and 4) appropriates \$150,000 in general funds to DHS in FY 23 for the establishment of the pilot center.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, 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.

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

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TELEPHONE: 808-586-1400 FAX: 808-586-1412
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To: Senate Committees on Public Safety, Intergovernmental,
and Military Affairs and on Human Services

From: Cheryl Kakazu Park, Director

Date: February 10, 2022, 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Via Videoconference

Re: Testimony on S.B. No. 2306
Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa Correctional Facility and would continue a working group to address visitation and support needs of children and families of incarcerated individuals. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) takes no position on the substance of this bill, but offers comments on the proposal to exempt the Family Reunification Working Group from chapter 92, HRS, part I of which is the Sunshine Law.

According to the bill, the group was established in January 2014 by the Keiki Caucus, which OIP understands to be a group of interested legislators working together with other government officials, advocates, and community members. Since the group was apparently not established by a legislative Act or similarly formal process, it would not have been subject to the Sunshine Law when established in 2014. HCR 205 / SCR 7 of 2019, which asked the Department of Human Services “in consultation with the Department of Public Safety, . . .to work with the Keiki Caucus’s Family Reunification Working Group and other community

Senate Committees on Public Safety, Intergovernmental,
and Military Affairs and on Human Services

February 10, 2022

Page 2 of 2

stakeholders to develop a plan to establish children-friendly and family-friendly visitation centers at all State correctional prisons and jails[,]” also would not have made the group subject to the Sunshine Law because a group established by legislative resolution does not meet the Sunshine Law’s definition of a board in the same way a group established by an Act. Thus, **OIP believes the effect of the exemption proposed by this bill would not be to exempt an existing Sunshine Law board from the Sunshine Law, but instead to ensure that an existing group currently not subject to the Sunshine Law does not become subject to the Sunshine Law** through being directed by this bill to do specified work and report back to the Legislature.

Because the effect of this exemption would be to keep the status quo for an existing working group which has apparently been working effectively for eight years, **OIP does not object to the exemption from the Sunshine Law in this instance. However, OIP notes that the Sunshine Law is only part I of chapter 92, so if the intent of this Committee is to exempt the working group from the Sunshine Law but not the remainder of chapter 92 (including authorization to charge for copies of government records), the exemption on bill page eight, lines 4-5, should be from “part I of chapter 92” rather than “chapter 92.”**

Thank you for considering OIP’s testimony.



Hawaii
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Hawaii 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: Senator Nishihara, Chair
Senator DeCoite, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and military affairs

Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Ihara, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: **SB 2306-relating to children and family of incarcerated individuals**
1:00 PM, February 10, 2022

Chair Nishihara, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Ihara, and committee members,

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!, we are writing to support in STRONG support SB 2306, relating to children and family of incarcerated individuals, and we ask for amendments to include an appropriation to the Department of Public Safety.

The lack of parental contact during incarceration is incredibly detrimental to the child and the family as a whole. It is a sad reality that collateral and misplaced punitive punishment falls on the children of incarcerated individuals.

Additionally, the lack of visitation is counterproductive to the supposed goal of incarceration. If the goal of incarceration is to rehabilitate individuals so that they do not end up incarcerated again, then it is integral to take into account the factors that play a role in recidivism. There is national data that finds incarcerated individuals are less likely to recidivate and more likely to have a successful re-entry into society when they can maintain contact with their loved ones. The family acts as an important support system for individuals coming out of correctional facilities. Creating visitation centers staffed by social service professionals, families will be provided the opportunity to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, and wrap-around services.

We are requesting that the bill include an appropriation to PSD to make the renovations needed to the Visitation Center site. As such, we request that the following language be added to match that of HB1741:

- *There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022—2023 for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu.*
- *The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of public safety for the purposes of this Act.*



— H a w a i i —
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Hawai'i should invest in a Family Visitation Center. We will be helping families sustain meaningful relationships through incarceration and strengthening our support of justice-involved families.

HCAN Speaks! respectfully requests the Committee to amend and support this measure.

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire
Director Early Learning and Healthy Policy

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

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

Carole Gruskin, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui

Get Ready Hawai'i

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

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 (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG - Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the

Great Northwest and

Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community

Center

The Catalyst Group

February 8, 2022

To: Senator Clarence Nishihara, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental
and Military Affairs

Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Human Services

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2306 RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILY OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

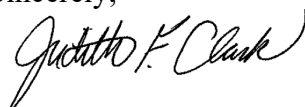
Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 2306 Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals.

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

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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

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



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL & MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Clarence Nishihara, Chair

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy San Buenaventura

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Thursday, February 10, 2022

1:00 PM

SB 2306 - STRONG SUPPORT FOR FAMILY VISITATION & RESOURCE CENTER

Aloha Chairs Nishihara and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs DeCoite and Ihara, 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 more than 4,085 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars or under the “care and custody” of the Department of Public Safety or the corporate vendor on any given day. We are always mindful that 1,111 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.

SB 2306 continues the work 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.

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 Hawaii State Prison.¹

In a little more than a year, in 2023, mass incarceration reaches a major milestone: its 50th birthday. Incarceration affects not the people for whom this event has become so common but their families, especially their children. Until mass incarceration came into being in the early 1970s, prison and jail incarceration were so uncommon that while they were tragic outcomes for individuals and those tied to them, their broader social importance would have simply paled in comparison to other institutional contacts. This could hardly be less the case now.

For mass incarceration to exacerbate inequality among families, it must be unequally distributed and do harm. If family member incarceration merely reflects existing disadvantage, it is unlikely to exacerbate inequality much, if at all. But this is not the case; across a range of indicators, we find that family member incarceration has negative effects on family well-being above and beyond existing disadvantages prior to incarceration.

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.²

¹ 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/

² 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.³

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 Department of Public Safety to bring this to reality. The group issued a report that is available to review electronically at the Department's website, at <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.

I remember when I first went into the women's prison and witnessed mothers and daughters, sisters, cousins, aunties, and even grandmas, all serving time together. It made an indelible mark on my heart. A few years later Community Alliance on Prisons convened a group of families and the stories they shared have made the issue of maintaining connections a key part of our work.

We are grateful that Blueprint for Change, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Public Safety have been working together to make a Family Visitation and Resource Center at Waiawa a reality.

We hope that the legislature sees the importance of this bill.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

³ See FN 1



February 8th, 2022
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 S Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB2306, Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals

Aloha chair, vice chair, and members of the corrections, military, and veterans committee.

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists supports SB2306.

Family-friendly visitor centers will encourage families to keep regular contact with their incarcerated caregiver and/or partner. National data shows that incarcerated individuals who keep regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when reentering society.

According to the 2011 Vera Institute study, "Many family members indicated that prison rules and practices, including searches, long waits, and inconsistent interpretations of dress codes for visitors, can be unclear, unpleasant, too restrictive, and reduce the likelihood of future visits."

Additionally, having visitation centers staffed by social service professionals will provide families with support opportunities such as referral and resource information to community-based services, guidance and counseling, and wrap-around services to address issues related to poverty (shelter and food security, income, et cetera). These services must incorporate culturally relevant strategies to provide equitable services.

House bill 1741 provides additional opportunity to begin the work of breaking the incarceration cycle. It provides stakeholders with the opportunity to continue the conversation about how this work is continued. Finally, it will provide more information and community-based services needed to help families sustain themselves and reduce the State's prison population and welfare costs.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alec Marentic,
President-Elect, Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists (HASP)
Email: hasp808@gmail.com

TO: Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, and Senate Committee on Human Services

RE: SB2306

POSITION: **STRONG SUPPORT with COMMENTS**

February 10, 2022

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair DeCoite, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara and members of the committees:

Blueprint for Change is 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 for the purpose of developing 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, and 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 is able to 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 is designed to inform services, procedures, and practices moving forward. In 2013 the QAR were showing 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 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 SB2306:

- 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 State of California has successfully operated visitation 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.

COMMENTS:

We are requesting that the bill include an appropriation to PSD in order for them to make the renovations needed to the Visitation Center site. As such, we request that the following language be added to match that of HB1741:

- *There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022—2023 for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu.*
- *The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of public safety for the purposes of this Act.*

I strongly urge the committee to pass SB2306. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Date: February 8, 2022

To: **Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs**
Senator Nishihara, Chair
Senator DeCoite, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Ihara Jr., Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Testimony in Support of **SB2306** – Relating to Children and Families of Incarcerated Individuals

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS strongly supports SB2306, requiring the department of human services to work with the department of public safety and other entities to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on `Oahu.

National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society. The State of California has successfully operated visitation centers like those being proposed by the bill for over thirty years.

SB2306 would do the following

- Encourage families to stay in frequent contact with their significant others who are incarcerated. This is especially important for children with incarcerated parents, who may be able to maintain relationships over the course of their lifetimes;
- 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;
- Provide relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices from kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners; and
- Provide an opportunity to 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.

We are requesting that the bill include an appropriation to the Public Safety Department, in order for the Department to make the renovations needed to the Visitation Center site. As such, we request that the following language be added to match that of HB1741:

- *There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022—2023 for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu.*
- *The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of public safety for the purposes of this Act.*

Mahalo for your continued support to improve the health, safety and well-being of our youngest keiki an their `ohana! We strongly urge the Committee to pass **SB2306**.

SB-2306

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 5:02:22 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/10/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Stand in Support.

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura
Senator Les Ihara, Jr.

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara
Senator Lynn DeCoite

Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 1300 HST

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2306 Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals

Aloha Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Les Ihara, Jr., and the members of the Committee on Human Services; Chair Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair Lynn DeCoite, and the members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs:

Mahalo for hearing SB2306 requiring the Department of Human Services to work with the Department of Public Safety to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility. I am writing in **support** of SB2306.

The objective of SB2306 entails the importance of keeping families together. Hawai'i honors this tradition, deeply rooted in cultural values in the family court system as well.

Incarceration has the capacity to permanently strain the family structure. I know the effect personally, as my late brother became incarcerated when I was 2-years-old. I still remember how close we were prior to his conviction; however, we lost touch over the next decade. When he was released and our family was reunited, it was like meeting a stranger. Our 16-year age difference and varying life experience(s) made it nearly impossible to reconnect. Consequently, he succumbed to recidivism, and passed away shortly after his release. We had no idea of his passing until 3 months had passed.

If the facility where my brother was held had a visitation and family resource center, I believe things would have ended differently.

The high cost of living in Hawai'i makes it increasingly difficult for people to live on their own; therefore, a tight knit family and a stable family structure is the type of support everyone needs to stay out of the streets upon release. Additionally, for incarcerated parents, it may be likely that they grew up in an unstable home; however, they should have every chance to break the cycle in hopes their children can have a future free from incarceration.

Mahalo for considering my testimony,

Soon Kim
Senate District 15

SB-2306

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 7:21:01 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/10/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Diana Bethel	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Co-Chairs Nishihara and San Buenaventura, Co-Vice Chairs DeCoite and Ihara, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in strong support of SB 2306 which would establish and fund a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa correctional facility and directs the Department of Human Services to continue to lead a working group to assess the needs of children and families of incarcerated individuals.

Maintaining and strengthening family relationships leads to many beneficial outcomes, including lowered risk of recidivism, improved health and behavior, and reduced negative impacts of an individual's incarceration on children and family members.

Please support SB 2306.

Mahalo,

Diana Bethel, Honolulu

SB-2306

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 8:40:02 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/10/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Muriel M Keliioomalu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Muriel Mililani Keliioomalu

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, and Senate Committee on Human Services

SB2306 - RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

STRONG SUPPORT with COMMENTS

February 10, 2022

Aloha Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair DeCoite, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara and members of the committees:

The following are reasons for STRONG SUPPORT SB2306:

- 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 State of California has successfully operated visitation 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.
- Further, a Vera Institute study, published in October 2012, found that “Incarcerated men and women who maintain contact with supportive family members are more likely to succeed after their release... Research on people returning from prison shows that family members can be valuable sources of support during incarceration and after release. For example, prison inmates who had more contact with their families and who reported positive relationships overall are less likely to be re-incarcerated.”
- According to research published in *Western Criminology Review* in 2006, “a remarkably consistent association has been found between family contact during incarceration and lower recidivism rates.”
- Correctional practices that “facilitate and strengthen family connections during incarceration” can “reduce the strain of parental separation, reduce recidivism rates, and increase the likelihood of successful re-entry,” according to a 2005 report by the Re-Entry Policy Council.
- According to the 2011 Vera Institute study, “Many family members also indicated that prison rules and practices – including searches, long waits, and inconsistent interpretations of dress codes for visitors – can be unclear, unpleasant, too restrictive, and even keep people from visiting again.

COMMENTS:

We are requesting that the bill include an appropriation to PSD in order for them to make the renovations needed to the Visitation Center site. As such, we request that the following language be added to match that of HB1741:

- *There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022—2023 for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu.*
- *The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of public safety for the purposes of this Act.*

I strongly urge the committee to pass SB2306. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

--

‘O wau nō me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Muriel M. keliihoomalu

SB-2306

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 9:20:37 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/10/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Malia Peters	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Malia Peters. I am a parent of a child whose father was incarcerated over 20 years ago. I strongly support SB 2306 relating to children and families of incarcerated individuals.

Twenty-five years ago our lives were forever changed when my ex-husband committed a horrible crime sentencing him to a 20 year prison sentence, which left my three-year-old son and I 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.

While there are various estimates of the number of children nationwide who have at least one parent that is incarcerated (over 2 million), we are still working to grasp the number of families affected here in our State of Hawaii. Studies have shown that in terms of negative impacts on children, incarceration may be worse than the death of a parent or the divorce of parents. When a parent passes away or when parents divorce, families receive a lot of sympathy, love, compassion, and financial support. When a parent is sentenced to prison, there is no "program" or "class" to attend, and very often there is no sympathy/empathy, but instead a "stigma" that is attached to these children/spouses/families. Many family members witnessed or were the victim of the crime, and there is often no emotional or financial assistance. The surviving spouse, significant other, or grandparent is often the sole provider putting physical, emotional, mental, and financial strain on families.

Something more concerning is the evidence that children who have a parent in prison are more likely to become incarcerated themselves as teenagers or adults, thus continuing the "cycle of incarceration" that sadly becomes generational in some families.

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 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. We needed help to learn how to cope, how to explain our situation, and where to go to access the different forms of support we 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, a now grown adult, sharing our 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.

I still dream of the amazing difference this could have made for us when we were lost, alone, and feeling despair and hopelessness.

Without these basic support services that a Visitation Center could provide, we will miss the opportunity to be able to offer hope and opportunity to implement a new way reaching these families with the intent to decrease the unique circumstances families of this population of our society face. We need to reduce the cycle of incarceration and we should do whatever we can to seek out new ideas and opportunities to do so.

Please support SB2306. 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

SB-2306

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 9:28:45 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/10/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kathleen O'Dell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Kathleen O'Dell, PhD

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, and Senate Committee on Human Services

SB2306 - RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

STRONG SUPPORT with COMMENTS

February 10, 2022

Aloha Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair DeCoite, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara and members of the committees:

The following are reasons for STRONG SUPPORT SB2306:

- **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 State of California has successfully operated visitation 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.
- Further, a Vera Institute study, published in October 2012, found that “Incarcerated men and women who maintain contact with supportive family members are more likely to succeed after their release... Research on people returning from prison shows that family members can be valuable sources of support during incarceration and after release. For example, prison inmates who had more contact with their families and who reported positive relationships overall are less likely to be re-incarcerated.”
- According to research published in Western Criminology Review in 2006, “a remarkably consistent association has been found between family contact during incarceration and lower recidivism rates.”
- Correctional practices that “facilitate and strengthen family connections during incarceration” can “reduce the strain of parental separation, reduce recidivism rates, and increase the likelihood of successful re-entry,” according to a 2005 report by the Re-Entry Policy Council.
- According to the 2011 Vera Institute study, “Many family members also indicated that prison rules and practices – including searches, long waits, and inconsistent interpretations of dress codes for visitors – can be unclear, unpleasant, too restrictive, and even keep people from visiting again.

COMMENTS:

We are requesting that the bill include an appropriation to PSD in order for them to make the renovations needed to the Visitation Center site. As such, we request that the following language be added to match that of HB1741:

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- The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of public safety for the purposes of this Act.

I strongly urge the committee to pass SB2306. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen O'Dell', written in a cursive style.

Kathleen O'Dell, PhD

SB-2306

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 11:48:47 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/10/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Shy Helm	Testifying for Blueprint for Change	Support	No

Comments:

Shy Helm

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, and Senate Committee on Human Services

SB2306 - RELATING TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

STRONG SUPPORT with COMMENTS

February 10, 2022

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- National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society;
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COMMENTS:

We are requesting that the bill include an appropriation to PSD in order for them to make the renovations needed to the Visitation Center site. As such, we request that the following language be added to match that of HB1741:

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- *The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of public safety for the purposes of this Act.*

I strongly urge the committee to pass SB2306. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.



Hawai'i

LATE

Committees: Committees on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs and Human Services
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.
Place: Via Videoconference
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in Support of S.B. 2306 Relating to Children and Family of Incarcerated Individuals

Dear Chairs Nishihara and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs and Committee Members:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i ("ACLU of Hawai'i") writes in **support of S.B. 2306**. This bill requires requires the Department of Human Services to work with the Department of Public Safety to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility.

The ACLU of Hawai'i is committed to transforming Hawaii's criminal legal system and building a new vision of safety and justice. We advocate for the State to shift spending priorities away from mass criminalization and incarceration that disparately impacts Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and Blacks, and low-income people towards health care, housing, education and human services in our communities. Simultaneously, we advocate for humane conditions of confinement, and comprehensive re-entry support services that starts from the first day of incarceration. Collectively, these strategies protect the civil rights and liberties of individuals and enhances individual and community health and wellness.

The proposed pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa is based on an acknowledgement that the effects of incarceration ripples outward, straining families and placing unfair burdens on children. This legislation aims to support families during a period of incarceration so that parents and children can maintain some degree of connection even through prison walls.

Decades of research presents the unified message that family contact during incarceration provides many benefits, both during incarceration and the reentry period.¹ These include:

- reducing recidivism
- improving physical and psychological health

¹ *Research roundup: The Positive Impacts of Family Contact for Incarcerated People and their Families*, Prison Policy Initiative (December 2021).

[https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/12/21/family_contact/#:~:text=In%202008%2C%20researchers%20found%20that,recidivism%20was%20defined%20as%20reconviction\).&text=Visitation%20is%20also%20correlated%20with%20adherence%20to%20prison%20rules.](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/12/21/family_contact/#:~:text=In%202008%2C%20researchers%20found%20that,recidivism%20was%20defined%20as%20reconviction).&text=Visitation%20is%20also%20correlated%20with%20adherence%20to%20prison%20rules.)

- improving behavior (reducing misconduct)
- improving family relationships

As noted by the R Street Institute, “Supportive family relationships can promote psychological and physiological health for incarcerated people and their loved ones, at a time when everyone’s health is otherwise deteriorating. When done well, visitation can ease anxiety in children and mitigate some of the impacts on strained interpersonal relationships. Serving families at this most critical period simply makes communities healthier.”²

In closing, we ask for your support of SB2306, which demonstrates that encouraging family contact is not only humane, but contributes to community safety.

Sincerely,

Carrie Ann Shirota

Carrie Ann Shirota
Policy Director
ACLU of Hawai‘i

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai‘i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai‘i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai‘i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai‘i has been serving Hawai‘i for over 50 years.

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai‘i
P.O. Box 3410
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96801
T: 808.522.5900
F: 808.522.5909
E: office@acluhawaii.org
www.acluhawaii.org

² The Importance of Supporting Family Connections to Ensure Successful Re-Entry, *R STREET SHORTS*, Emily Mooney and Nila Bala, October 2018.
<https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Final-Short-No.-63-1.pdf>

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