

**STATE OF HAWAI‘I**  
**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender,  
State of Hawai‘i to the Senate Committee on  
Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs**

February 1, 2022

S.B. No. 2373: RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender supports S.B. No. 2373.

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

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

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

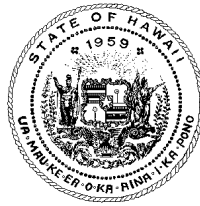
those who serve out their maximum prison term. These unlucky inmates are often released from custody with no money, no identification, no housing, no food, no bus pass, and no phone. Due to the lack of comprehensive programs that focus on transitioning them through the processes of reentry, rehabilitation,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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on S.B. No. 2373.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

**MAX N. OTANI**  
DIRECTOR

**Maria C. Cook**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Tommy Johnson**  
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**Jordan Lowe**  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

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

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2373  
RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY.**

by  
Max N. Otani, Director  
Department of Public Safety

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

Tuesday, February 1, 2022; 1:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Via Video Conference

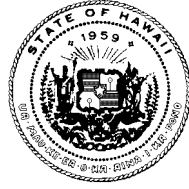
Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) has reviewed Senate Bill (SB) 2373, which seeks to establish and fund a new project to be named, "Project Reset", with the purpose of overseeing the development and implementation of comprehensive post-release housing programs to assist offenders transitioning back to the community. The new "Project Reset" will be administered by the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness and placed administratively within the Department of Human Services (DHS).

PSD supports SB 2373 and pledges to work closely with the Governor's Homelessness Coordinator and DHS on this initiative.

Thank you for the opportunity submit testimony on SB 2373.

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

January 31, 2022

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2373** – RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY.

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

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the measure, defers to the Department of Public Safety (PSD), offers comments and clarification.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds for a program named Project Reset which will help prisoners with reentry, rehabilitation, employment, and housing post-sentence.

DHS agrees that more resources are needed to assist individuals with reentering the community after incarceration. DHS will support the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness and work collaboratively with PSD. However, this one-time appropriation may not be enough to establish a new program though funds may be added to existing program capacity to target individuals reentering the community.

Also, though the Governor appoints the Coordinator, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness is a part of the Director's Office of the Department of Human Services. During Governor Ige's administration, the Coordinator and staff are with the Governor's staff at the

capitol. A new program for the Coordinator does not need to be administratively attached to the department.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

February 1, 2022

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

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

SUBJECT: **SB 2373 – RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY.**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 1:00 p.m.  
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII  
*The Voice of Business*

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and  
Military Affairs  
Tuesday, February 1, 2022, at 10:00 A.M.  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: SB 2373 Relating to Offender Reentry**

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** SB 2373, which appropriates funds for a program named Project Reset which will help prisoners with reentry, rehabilitation, employment and housing post-sentence.

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

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 COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL,  
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
ON  
SENATE BILL NO. 2373

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

RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2373.

S.B. No. 2373 establishes the Project Reset Program, under the administration of the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness and administratively placed under the Department of Human Services, to oversee the development and implementation of comprehensive post-release housing programs to assist offenders who are transitioning back into the community. This bill also appropriates \$375,000 in general funds for FY 23 to implement and administer the program.

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



**SB2373 Project Reset Offender Housing Reentry**  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair  
Tuesday, Feb 1 2022: 1:00 pm : Videoconference

**Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB2373:**

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

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

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

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

**3. Using nationally standardized screening and assessment tools are essential to develop appropriate reentry plans to determine an integrated approach for reentry:**

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

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

**SB-2373**

Submitted on: 1/31/2022 1:27:34 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Denise Boisvert	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Senators,

I am submitting testimony in FULL SUPPORT of SB2373 because prisoner rehabilitation services are known to be very effective in reducing recidivism; the reduction of which results in immeasurable benefits to society as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Denise Boisvert

Waikiki

**SB-2373**

Submitted on: 1/31/2022 2:09:10 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kim Jorgensen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I'm in FULL SUPPORT of SB2373.

Mahalo,

Kim Jorgensen

**SB-2373**

Submitted on: 1/31/2022 2:51:04 PM

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

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

Comments:

Stand in support.