



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

February 1, 2022

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

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

SUBJECT: **SB 2639, Relating to the Comprehensive Offender Reentry System**

POSITION: STRONGLY SUPPORT

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee

The Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission supports Senate Bill 2639, Relating to the Comprehensive Offender Reentry System, which amends Section 353H-2.5, HRS, to require a risk/needs assessment specifically intended to assess the needs of female offenders returning to the community.

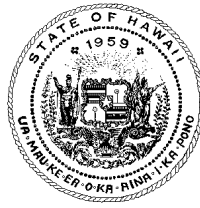
Criminal justice policies, practices and programs have traditionally been designed for men and applied to women without regard to the unique needs of women. Gender responsive risk/needs assessment tools better identify interventions which connect women to programs and treatment to address their needs and reduce the incidence of recidivism.

It has long been established that women's pathways to crime differ significantly from those of men, too often beginning in childhood physical and sexual abuse. Women are far more likely than men to commit crimes related to poverty (prostitution, credit card fraud) and substance abuse (drug-related offenses). Dysfunctional relationships lead to a lack of self-worth and any sense of control over their own lives, and contribute to the high rates of depression among women offenders. As women are the primary caretakers of children, parental issues present unique challenges for impoverished women. Gender responses programs and treatments best address the needs of women.

We urge you to pass this measure to ensure proper interventions are identified and designed to assist the successful

Mark Patterson
Chair
Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2639
RELATING TO THE COMPREHENSIVE OFFENDER REENTRY SYSTEM.

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:

Senate Bill (SB) 2639 seeks to require the Department of Public Safety's (PSD) Offender Reentry Office to develop and implement a risk assessment tool specifically to assess the needs of female offenders and to provide a report to the Legislature regarding this matter.

The Department supports the intent of this measure and offers the following information on initiatives currently underway as its affirmation of that support. In recognition of the importance of addressing the specific needs of female offenders, PSD has completed the redescription of a Corrections Program Specialist II position assigned to the Reentry Coordination Office to be dedicated to work on the assessment, programming, treatment, and reentry needs of female offenders.

Part of this CPS II's responsibilities will be to review nationally well-regarded offender assessment instruments, including conducting research with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), American Correctional Association (ACA), and other entities to help evaluate the effectiveness of the Level of

Service Inventory – Revised (LSI-R) assessment instrument currently in use and to review other instruments to determine if more accurate and effective instruments specifically for female offenders may be available.

PSD has already made substantial progress towards accomplishing the purpose of SB 2639 and respectfully suggests that the measure may not be needed. The Department will be certain to include ongoing progress reports as a part of its Annual Report to the Legislature to include key performance indicators, provided under HRS 353G.

Thank you for the opportunity submit testimony on SB 2639.

SB-2639

Submitted on: 1/30/2022 11:54:13 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Linda Rich	Testifying for Women's Prison Project	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members Baker, Riviere and Fevella,

My name is Linda Rich. I am testifying today on behalf of the Women's Prison Project in **Strong Support** of SB 2639, RELATING TO THE COMPREHENSIVE OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAM.

Prior to my volunteer work with the Women's Prison Project, I served for 14 years as Director of Clinical Services for the Salvation Army Treatment Services followed by eight years as Director of of that organization.

SB2639 mandates that the Department of Public Safety's Offender Reentry Office develop and implement a gender-responsive risk and needs assessment tool for use in transition planning for women reentering the community from incarceration.

Research over many years and in many states has identified women's pathways to crime, which are often quite different than those of men. These pathways to crime are not adequately identified by risk and needs assessment tools validated with male populations.

Women's pathways to incarceration, according to the Hawaii Judiciary's Criminal Justice Research Institute (CJRI), are often related to social and economic marginalization and include poverty, lack of education, lack of access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, histories of trauma including childhood abuse and domestic violence, parenting stress, and lack of access to safe and affordable housing. These same factors are barriers to women's successful reentry and non-recidivism. Property and drug related crimes, the majority of women's offenses, are often linked to poverty, dysfunctional relationships, and survival.

A 2018 study of women transitioning out of the Women's Community Correctional Center showed a recidivism rate of 51.3 percent, according to the Hawaii CJRI. Its review of women's pathways to crime suggest that recidivism could be reduced and the lives of women and their families within our communities greatly enhanced by utilizing a validated gender responsive risk and needs assessment tool that would align assessment with women's pathway research to more accurately assess risk and identify women's needs and strengths.

The Women's Prison Project strongly supports SB2639 because an accurate assessment is critical for an effective transition plan that would reduce recidivism and result in healthier families and safer communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for considering our thoughts on this important issue. If you have further questions about WPP's support for this measure, contact Linda Rich

Linda Rich

On behalf of the Women's Prison Project



HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

SB2639 Risk Assessment WCCC for Offender 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 SB2639:

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 believes it is a great idea to develop and implement risk needs assessment tools to properly place offenders in programs and services including a risk needs assessment tool that is specifically intended to assess the needs of female offenders;

HSAC supports and recommends adding nationally standardized treatment screening and assessments to guide the development of reentry plans that would include various levels of treatment such as substance use disorder residential or and outpatient that address criminality issues, as well as co-occurring mental health.

If there is not a chronic issue of substance abuse, then the assessment would recommend recovery-oriented services such as medication management and case management.

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

SB-2639

Submitted on: 1/30/2022 10:35:14 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support