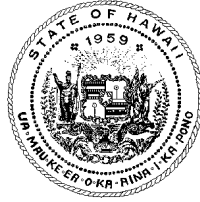


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No. \_\_\_\_\_

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

by  
**Max N. Otani, Director**

Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 15, 2022; 10:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 211 & Via Videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, 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 2023 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, program, treatment, and reentry needs of female offenders.

Part of this CPS II's responsibilities will be review nationally well-regarded offender assessment instruments nationwide, 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

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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 necessary. 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, as required under HRS 353G.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 2639.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: February 15, 2022  
TIME: 10:30 AM, Via Videoconference

**SUPPORT FOR SB2639 RELATING TO COMPREHENSIVE OFFENDER REENTRY SYSTEM**

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 followed by eight years as Director of the Salvation Army Family Treatment Services, providing Substance abuse and mental health treatment and therapeutic living for women and their children, including corrections involved women.

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. Fortunately, there have already been a number of well researched and validated women's risk and needs assessment tools developed that are being used in other states which could be considered for use in Hawaii.

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.

Property and drug related crimes, the majority of women's offenses, are often linked to poverty, dysfunctional relationships, and survival. These same factors are barriers to women's successful reentry and non-recidivism.

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. We should not accept that high a rate. as inevitable.

CJRI's 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 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 , gender responsive 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.

Linda Rich      [richl001@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:richl001@hawaii.rr.com)

On behalf of the Women's Prison Project

**SB-2639**

Submitted on: 2/13/2022 3:43:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/15/2022 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Elizabeth Nelson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I sincerely hope you will pass this bill which allows women offenders to be assessed differently than male. Reentry is crucial for offenders of both genders, but especially for female. If they cannot find work, housing and support, they will be back in bad situations and eventually jail. Thank you,

Elizabeth Nelson

Kaneohe

**LATE**

**SB-2639**

Submitted on: 2/14/2022 3:46:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/15/2022 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Robin Hart	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I'm writing in support of this bill. I am shocked it isn't already in place as law already. The Offender Reentry Office of the Dept. of Public Safety must develop and implement a risk needs assessment tool that is specifically intended to assess the needs of female offenders. It is crucial to identify needed services while incarcerated and to determine services and transition planning for reentry.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.