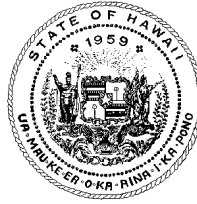


DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



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 2640  
RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

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 Higher Education  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 15, 2022; 3:00 p.m.  
Via Videoconference

Chairs Nishihara and Kim, Vice Chairs DeCoite and Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) has reviewed Senate Bill (SB) 2640, which appropriates funds for the second year of a pilot program to train incarcerated women at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) to be general education development tutors for their peers and funding for college correspondence courses for the inmate tutors.

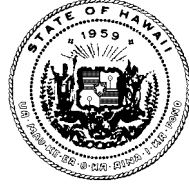
The Department supports the intent of this measure and respectfully offers the following comments. A total of five (5) G.E.D. tutors were successfully trained and certified in the first year using Funds from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief grant (GEER), provided through the Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice. As of January 2022, a total of nine (9) women at WCCC earned their G.E.D. diplomas, and of the nine graduates, six (6) went on to enroll in post-secondary programs for

Testimony on SB 2640  
Senate Committee Public Safety,  
Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
February 15, 2022  
Page 2

college credit. Although the numbers may be modest, the program's success is great and deserving of further support.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony supporting the intent of SB 2640.

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 10, 2022

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

The Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senate Committee on Higher Education

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2640 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.**

Hearing: February 15, 2022, 3:00 p.m.  
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

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

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds for the second year of a program to train incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for their peers, provide college correspondence courses for women in the women's community correctional center, and provide reentry and transition services for women wanting to continue their education post-incarceration. Enables partnerships with the Department of Education, University of Hawaii, and Department of Public Safety. Appropriates moneys.

DHS supports the continuation of the education program for women in incarceration initially funded by the governor's emergency education relief (GEER). Women who are

incarcerated often experienced economic disparities, familial instability, and violence that impacted their education and employment experiences.

Reentry and transition support programs are needed to help these individuals be successful upon release. Increasing opportunities while incarcerated to obtain general education degrees, pursue college credits, and become tutors of their peers, are transformative experiences so that upon release, women will have more confidence and the minimum qualifications to re-enter the workforce.

These peer tutors offer non-judgmental support, develop relationships and social connections, and offer general education development tutoring. With their lived experience, peer support specialists are recognized as effective and trusted resources for women transitioning to community life.

Women exiting incarceration need education and credentials to return to the competitive workforce to support themselves and their families. Most women also have children and return to the family and their parenting role. Children react differently to their parent's return, and having educational confidence may help parents restore their relationship as they guide their children through school and life. Parental incarceration is a cause of multi-generational trauma and is an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) that disproportionately impacts children of color and children in poverty. Education is a crucial component to breaking the cycle of multi-generational poverty and incarceration.

DHS is committed to collaborating with the departments of education and public safety to address the women's basic needs with available concrete services DHS can offer.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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 COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL,  
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS AND HIGHER EDUCATION  
ON  
SENATE BILL NO. 2640

**February 15, 2022**  
**3:00 p.m.**  
**Via Videoconference**

RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

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

Senate Bill No. 2640 appropriates \$250,000 in general funds as second-year funding to the Department of Public Safety (PSD) for FY 23 for the education program for imprisoned women, a program to train incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for their peers, provide college correspondence courses for women in the Women's Community Correctional Center, and provide reentry and transition services for women who wish to continue their education post incarceration. The bill also indicates that PSD may transfer the appropriated funds to the University of Hawai'i or the Department of Education or award a grant to a private entity to achieve the intended purposes of the bill.

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.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY  
AFFAIRS

Honorable Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, February 15, 2022

TIME: 3:00 PM, Via Videoconference

**STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB2640 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN**

The Women's Prison Project (WPP) strongly supports this measure appropriating \$250,000 to continue the second year of a pilot program for higher and continuing education at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). The first year was funded with a [2021 GEER grant](#). The program is a collaborative effort between Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ), the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), Windward Community College (WCC), College of Social Sciences University of Hawai'i (UH), and McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA).

"As Horace Mann once said, education is 'the great equalizer,' but this only works if the most vulnerable individuals have access to it" ([Bender, 2018](#)). Incarcerated people in Hawai'i read at an average 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade level [according to the state](#) and our experience working at WCCC shows many average less especially in math. Almost 60% of the women at WCCC are high school dropouts. These numbers alone show we suffer from systemic problems that begin with school failures, using "zero tolerance" for school discipline resulting in [the school to prison pipeline](#).

This results in only two months of this innovative education program shows its remarkable value for helping women continue their educations. The program trained imprisoned women who have at least a high school education to become tutors for their peers studying for the GED. Since the program began in earnest in November 2021, five women completed a 20-hour training program in cooperative education, which taught them how to engage students in hands on learning. They were hired as tutors and financial incentives are also offered for women to complete the GED. To study for the GED with a poor academic history is especially challenging. The women studying

for the GED in this program had their grade levels assessed before they began at only 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, but with the encouragement of their tutors they began to see themselves as capable of passing the test. About 30 women enrolled in the program who worked for innumerable hours studying for the test (one dropped out for personal reasons but came back and is working on passing the GED currently). While the incentives helped get the women into the classroom to begin studying, it was the tutors' persistence, and consistently applied academic assistance and inspiration, that helped the women learn the material to pass the GED.

The success of the program to date far exceeds its initial expectations. Since 2016 an average rate of only three (3) women a year took and passed the GED at WCCC. In this program, within only 10 weeks, nine (9) women passed the GED; four (4) more need to only pass the math section to pass the whole test; three (3) more need to pass math and another subject; and five (5) more women need to pass math and two more sections to pass the entire GED test. It is anticipated they will pass. Another new cohort of tutors will be trained from the group who recently passed the GED.

Higher education is also supported by this program including providing college correspondence courses for women who have high school educations or passed the GED. Also keeping Windward Community College at WCCC is part of the program along with reentry assistance to support the women in continuing their educations when they are released from prison.

The research is clear that higher and continuing [education reduces repeat crime](#), and an academic paper on the program has already been accepted for publication later this year in a book about cooperative and peace education. We can share the draft with of this paper if you are interested.

We must provide education for those in our correctional institutions who literally fell through the cracks in our education system. We urge the Committees to please pass this bill. If you have any questions about WPP's support please contact Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH, at [lorenn@hawaii.edu](mailto:lorenn@hawaii.edu) or (808) 218-3712. Mahalo for your public service.



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY  
AFFAIRS

Honorable Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, February 15, 2022

TIME: 3:00 PM, Via Videoconference

**STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB2640 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN**

Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ) strongly supports this measure appropriating \$250,000 to continue the second year of a pilot program for higher and continuing education at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). The first year was funded with a [2021 GEER grant](#). The program is a collaborative effort between HFRJ, the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), Windward Community College (WCC), College of Social Sciences University of Hawai'i (UH), and McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA).

"As Horace Mann once said, education is 'the great equalizer,' but this only works if the most vulnerable individuals have access to it" ([Bender, 2018](#)). Incarcerated people in Hawai'i read at an average 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade level [according to the state](#) and our experience working at WCCC shows many average less, especially in math. Almost 60% of the women at WCCC are high school dropouts. These numbers alone show we suffer from systemic problems that begin with school failures and using "zero tolerance" for school discipline caused "[the school to prison pipeline](#)."

In only two months the results of this innovative education program shows its remarkable value for helping women continue their educations. The program trained imprisoned women who have at least a high school education to become tutors for their peers studying for the GED. Since the program began in earnest in November 2021, five women completed a 20-hour training program in cooperative education, which taught them how to engage students in hands on learning. They were hired as tutors. Financial incentives are also offered for women to complete the GED. To study for the GED with a poor academic history is especially challenging. The women studying for

the GED in this program had grade levels assessed before they began. They tested at only the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, but with the encouragement and help of their tutors they began to see themselves as capable of passing the test. About 30 women enrolled in the program who worked for innumerable hours studying for the test (one dropped out for personal reasons but came back and is working on passing the GED currently). While the incentives helped get the women into the classroom to begin studying, it was the tutors', and consistently applied assistance, and their determined inspiration, that helped the women learn the material to pass the GED.

The success of the program to date far exceeds its initial expectations. Since 2016 an average of three (3) women a year passed the GED at WCCC. In this program, within only 10 weeks, nine (9) women passed the GED; four (4) more need to pass only the math section to complete the whole test; three (3) more need to pass math and another subject; and five (5) more women need to pass math and two more sections to complete the entire GED test. The recent Omicron variant of covid has delayed their tested, but it is anticipated they will pass the GED soon. Another new cohort of tutors will be trained from the group who recently passed the GED in the program.

Higher education is also supported by this program including providing college correspondence courses for women who have high school educations or passed the GED. Keeping Windward Community College at WCCC is part of the program along with reentry assistance to support the women in continue their educations when they are released from prison.

The research is clear that higher and continuing [education reduces repeat crime](#). An academic paper on the program has already been accepted for publication later this year in a book about cooperative and peace education. We are happy to share this paper if you are interested.

We must provide education for those in our correctional institutions who literally fell through the cracks in our education system. We urge the Committees to please pass this bill. If you have any questions about WPP's support please contact Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH, at [lorenn@hawaii.edu](mailto:lorenn@hawaii.edu) or (808) 218-3712. Mahalo for your public service.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
And  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.  
By  
Debora J. Halbert  
Associate Vice President for Academic Programs and Policy  
University of Hawai'i System

### SB 2640 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

Chairs Nishihara and Kim, Vice Chairs DeCoite and Kidani, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 2640, relating to the appropriation of funds for the second year of a program to train incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for their peers, provide college correspondence courses for women in the women's community correctional center, and provide reentry and transition services for women wanting to continue their education post incarceration.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of SB 2640 (companion to House Bill 1779) and upholds the value of the current program. This bill appropriates additional funds for the Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice to support their efforts to continue to provide for the second year of their education program for imprisoned women. The UH supports the program and its intent. Windward Community College (Windward CC) has taken the primary lead on this initiative and is partnering with Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice in this educational effort.

Education is the most effective strategy known for preventing recidivism. Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice's work is helping not only the female incarcerated population but their families, their communities, and our State by providing more effective rehabilitation, advocacy, resources and skills to support these women upon release. Their support provides a foundation for enrollees so that their lives can have meaning and they can (re-)build families and careers.

Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice helps women complete their GED, making them eligible for Windward CC's program, utilizing a peer tutoring model that builds pride and agency in the tutors while supporting GED students. Once these women have completed their GED, Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice has helped facilitate planning for Windward CC to partner with University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Social Sciences to support students in their transition to the baccalaureate degree program.

The ability for Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice to provide support in recruiting and enrolling students, primarily upon GED completion, and provide tuition for students to take courses can help Windward CC continue in an environment where higher education has not traditionally thrived.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 2640.

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental & Military Affairs  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 3:00pm  
Via Videoconference

### **Testimony in Support of SB 2640**

Chairs Nishihara & Mercado Kim, Vice Chairs DeCoite & Kidani, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of SB 2640**, which appropriates fund for the second year of a program to train incarcerated women to be general education tutors for their peers, provide college correspondence courses for women in the women's correctional center and provide reentry and transition services for women wanting to continue their education post incarceration. Enables partnerships with Department of Education, University of Hawaii and Department of Public Safety.

YWCA O'ahu is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. In 1900 we opened our doors to provide opportunity to women for growth, leadership and power to change. Today, over a century later, the YWCA O'ahu is the largest and oldest women's membership organization in the State of Hawaii. We are a charter member of the YWCA USA and is one of more than 200 community associations nationwide that share the mission of empowering women and eliminating racism.

As a new core of women are preparing for our future, we are committed to reinventing the YWCA for the 21<sup>st</sup> century so it remains relevant to all women as their lives and needs change. The YWCA offers a unique place – a place where women and girls can build relationships for life and have opportunities to move forward in life and give back to their community. Our three centers at the YWCA, Fernhurst, Kokokahi and Laniakea, provide valuable programs and services that develop women and girls' social, economic, leadership and community skills.

In December of 2018, the HCR 85 Task Force released its findings and final report to the legislature. In this report they stated that while they came from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints that they all agreed that "Hawaii's correctional system is not producing acceptable, cost-effective, or sustainable outcomes and needs immediate and profound change". The primary recommendation from the task force was to "begin to transition from a punitive to a rehabilitative correctional system".

We support this bill because it does just what Task Force 85 report says we must do – to move to a rehabilitative system. Providing opportunities for training to incarcerated women is vital in this process and may open up career opportunities or pathways that they otherwise would not have been aware of.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2640.

Jen Wilbur  
Director of Advocacy  
YWCA O'ahu



## **SB2640 Women's Prison Education Project**

### **COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS**

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair

### **COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Tuesday, Feb 15 2022: 3:00 pm : Videoconference

### **Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB2640:**

*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.*

Education for women incarcerated and going through a reentry process back into their community has **multiple benefits**:

1. Provides skills to develop their potential, helps with employment, instills confidence, develops ethics, and improves their well-being.
2. Improves relations with PSD and parole staff members.
3. Dramatically enhances self-esteem.<sup>1</sup>
4. Reentry education has many positive effects on the children of reentry women.

Moreover, it is a highly cost-effective investment.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Northwestern University Prison Education Program 2022 <https://sites.northwestern.edu/npep/benefits-of-prison-education/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CInside%E2%80%9D%20Benefits&text=Prison%20education%20also%20breaks%20down,the%20prisoners'%20self%2Desteem.>

**SB-2640**

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 12:09:08 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kat Brady	Testifying for Community Alliance on Prisons	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Nishihara and Kim and members of the PSM and HRE Committees!

Community Alliance on Prisons is in support of this educational program for women at WCCC where they are trained as peer tutors in general education. This is wonderful! And providing college courses - which, in our humble opinion, should be partnering with UH and our Community College system - and providing reentry and transition services for women wanting to further their education post release.

Education is the route out of poverty and an economic mobility booster!. Please support.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

**SB-2640**

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 10:52:02 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Colleen Rost-Banik	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Colleen Rost-Banik. I am a resident of Honolulu and a Sociology and Women's Studies Lecturer within the University of Hawaii system. I strongly support SB2640 and urge you to do so as well.

One of the places I am privileged to teach is within the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). This has been made possible through federal grant funding that Windward Community College has received. This funding is running out - just at a time when women at the correctional center are getting really excited about educational possibilities. While I am not associated with the GED program nor the GED tutor program, many of the students I have had in sociology courses are now tutors in the GED program, through the Hawaii Friends for Restorative Justice initiative. Having worked with WCCC for several years, I must say that this tutoring and GED program has sparked the women's interest. This is the first time that I've seen women in the prison excited to study for their GED. And the women who are tutors are really skilled at breaking the information down in understandable ways. Learning from peers adds a level of motivation for the students to succeed. (I've encouraged a few to think about a career as a teacher as I think they have extremely strong teaching skills.)

I hope you will vote in support of SB2640 which provides additional funding for this educational opportunity for women at WCCC. Not only does education help alleviate boredom for the women (and thus lead to better behavior while incarcerated), it also offers them the realization that they are smart and that they can pursue formal education and lawful careers. In short, education reduced recidivism. The women at WCCC deserve our time, attention, and resources. Please help to make it so.

Respectfully,  
Colleen Rost-Banik, PhD

**SB-2640**

Submitted on: 2/10/2022 12:40:52 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2022 3:00:00 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.



**SB-2640**

Submitted on: 2/10/2022 7:48:33 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Nikki-Ann Yee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**I am writing in strong support of SB2640. It is a great program that not only trains women to be general education peer tutors, but also allows them to receive education while they are at WCCC and after their release. Growing up, I had family members in and out of the system, who never had other opportunities and remained in a vicious cycle. And even when they got out, they didn't have many options to better themselves. Education is the great equalizer in life. It is a route out of poverty for these women and a chance to turn their life around.**

**Mahalo for hearing this bill and I urge you to pass it.**

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: Carmen Hulu Lindsey, Chair  
Board of Trustees at the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

SUBJECT: SB 2640 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

Hearing: February 15, 2022, 3:00 p.m.  
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

My name is Carmen Hulu Lindsey, Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and I am providing written testimony on behalf of the Women's Prison Project in **SUPPORT** of S.B. 2640. I support this measure because our incarcerated women need more resources and services. By providing funding to this program, we are taking one step closer to addressing the unique needs of our women and demonstrating that we see, hear and care about them. When I watched the youtube video of the joint PSM/HMS hearing held on February 10, 2022, I heard the Honorable Senator Rosalyn Baker's concern over our incarcerated women, especially the ones who are released from the system's jurisdiction, and how we are allowing our women to fall through the cracks due to the lack of services to assist with their transition. I believe this education program is one way to assist our women with their transition once released from prison. This program allows our women to better themselves through education, as well as it provides them with reentry and transition services should they choose to continue their education once released from prison. Another positive aspect I see is this program will allow them to establish healthy relationships with individuals from the partnering organizations.

I humbly ask the Committees for their consideration and support on this measure and I mahalo the Committees for the opportunity to offer written testimony.

**LATE**

**SB-2640**

Submitted on: 2/15/2022 2:52:55 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ann S Freed	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Nishihara, Chair Kim, Vice Chairs and Members,

Strong support for this measure.

Mahalo,

Ann S. Freed



Hawai'i

**LATE**

Committees: Committees on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs and Higher Education  
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.  
Place: Via Videoconference  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in Support of S.B. 2640 Relating to Incarcerated Women

Dear Chairs Nishihara and Kim, Vice Chairs and Committee Members:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i ("ACLU of Hawai'i") writes in **support of S.B. 2640**. This bill appropriates funding for the second year of a program to provide training to incarcerated women to be general education tutors for their peers, provide college correspondence courses for women in the women's community correctional center, and provide reentry and transition services for women wanting to continue their education post incarceration.

The ACLU of Hawai'i is committed to transforming Hawaii's criminal legal system and building a new vision of safety and justice. First and foremost, we advocate for decarceration strategies to reduce the number of people in our jails and prisons and shifting 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 within communities.

Simultaneously, we advocate for humane conditions of confinement, meaningful rehabilitation opportunities, and comprehensive re-entry support services that starts from the first day of incarceration. This includes education and higher education.

Education in correctional settings is a cost-effective way to reduce crime and leads to a long term benefits across the entire population for a myriad of reasons:

- The Rand Corporation issued a 2016 report that showed that individuals who participate in any tpe of educational program while in prison are 43% less likely to return to prison.
- Prisons with college programs have less violence among incarcerated people. In turn, this creates a safer enviorment for both incarcerated people and jail and prison staff.

- Children with parents with college degrees are more likely to complete college. This enhanced social mobility for families, and helps to break cycles of incarceration.
- People with criminal records experience many barriers to obtaining employment with livable wages. On average, formerly incarcerated people earn 11% less than those with no criminal record doing the same job. They are also 15-30% less likely to find a job in the first place. Earning a high school and college diploma increased employment and other life opportunities.
- Education empowers people by restoring their self-esteem and giving them a voice.

In closing, we ask for your support of **SB2640** which helps women to prepare for their successful transition home through education and peer mentoring opportunities. Please invest in education, not building new and expanded jails and prisons.

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.*

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**SB-2640**

Submitted on: 2/14/2022 4:44:53 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ashley Galacgac	Testifying for AF3IRM Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass SB2640. Educational and training programs are vital in providing the skills and opportunity to pursue life goals post-incarceration. Women who are incarcerated may build community and a support system amongst their peers and the broader community. This will be vital in addressing recidivism as women may be able to return home to their loved ones.