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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 WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2774

February 24, 2022
10:00 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER

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

Senate Bill No. 2774 appropriates \$200,000 in general funds for FY 23 to the Department of Public Safety for the Women's Community Correctional Center to further expand reentry planning circles, also known as "huikahi" circles, which are a part of a reentry planning process shown to decrease recidivism.

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.

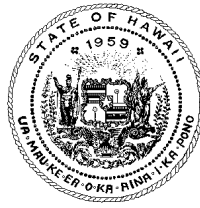
Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- 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.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2774
RELATING TO WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER.

by
Max N. Otani, Director
Department of Public Safety

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

February 24, 2022; 10:00 a.m.
Videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports the intent of Senate Bill (SB) 2774, which provides funding to further expand huikahi restorative circles as part of the reentry planning process at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC).

The success of these circles has allowed inmates to reconnect and reconcile with their families prior to release and to further develop their support system in the community.

As with other programs and services, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted this program, and WCCC has not been able to schedule these circles on a consistent basis. One restorative circle was conducted in the Fall of 2021.

The Department believes that this process would be even more effective as a jail-diversion option for individuals in the community, such as, probation violators.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.



HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

SB2774 Huikahi Circles (Restorative Circles) for Offender Reentry

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Thursday, Feb 24 2022: 10:00 am : Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB2774:

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 the Hawaii version of Restorative Circles that is a group process with offenders, victims, family and friends and is now evidenced-based practices:

- It has been growing in its use as part of offender reentry processes.
- The group processes is self-directed, goal-oriented, and an active learning experience for participants.
- It promotes positive motivation to repair harm and to take responsibility for their futures.
- Besides decreasing recidivism, the Huikahi Circle provides healing for people harmed.

This engaging process is important because it involves the public to help with recidivism and reentry back into their communities.

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

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 24, 2022

10:00 AM

SB 2774 - STRONG SUPPORT for HUIKAHI RESTORATIVE CIRCLES AT WCCC

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee!

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 4,052 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety 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 2774 appropriates funds to support the Huikahi Restorative Circles that have been operating since 2005. Although they are part of Hawai`i's Reentry law - 353H, HRS - they currently are operating only at the Women's Community Correctional Center. This program has brought families, friends, and employers together for a healing and solution-focused gathering where everyone in the circle becomes part of that person's successful transition back to the community. It is truly a community process!

Please support this wonderful program that restores hope, builds relationships, and reunites families and friends. Mahalo for hearing this bill.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

I have a dream that we won't have to talk about 'restorative justice' because it will be understood that true justice is about restoration, and about transformation. I have a dream.

Howard Zehr

SB-2774

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 7:10:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/24/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nikos Leverenz	Testifying for Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center	Support	No

Comments:

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) supports SB 2774, which makes an appropriation to further the practice of huikahi restorative circles at the Women's Community Correctional Center.

HHHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many of our program clients and participants have also been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. The continued criminalization of those with behavioral health problems compounds their suffering and further jeopardizes their health and well-being.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

HEARING DATE: Thursday, February 24, 2022
TIME: 10:00 PM, Via Videoconference

SUPPORT FOR SB2744 RELATING TO WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER (WCCC)

The Women's Prison Project (WPP) strongly supports this measure appropriating \$200,000 to provide the [reentry planning process, known as huikahi circles](#), for women incarcerated at WCCC.

Reentry planning by individual incarcerated people is vital for their successful return to the community and their desisting from crime ([Taxman, 2004](#)). Huikahi circles are for incarcerated people who take responsibility for their behavior and want to make amends with harmed loved ones and the community—and who want to plan for their transition back into the community.

The process was first piloted in 2005 at Waiawa Correctional Facility. It has been provided at several state prisons, but mainly at WCCC. The circles have been provided *pro bono* and with private grants to the state prisons. Except for the state's federal [2021 GEER grant](#), the state has never funded the process for adults.

The process has been [extensively researched](#). It is [healing for children](#) of incarcerated parents [and other loved ones](#). An [independent evaluation](#) of the process shows it reduces recidivism. Another study shows it can help decrease Hawai'i's prison population.

We urge the Committee to please pass this bill. If you have any questions about WPP's support please contact Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH, at lorenn@hawaii.edu or (808) 218-3712. Mahalo for your public service.

Leela Bilmes Goldstein

on behalf of the Women's Prison Project

SB-2774

Submitted on: 2/21/2022 9:03:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/24/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT SB 2774 RELATING TO WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER.

My name is Ohad (Amitabh) Amidor. I am a Social Work student in the Thompson School of Social Work at the University of Hawai'i.

I fully support bill SB2774.

I live on the island of Maui, and before the pandemic, I volunteered with the group Ka Ipu Ha'a at the Maui Community Correctional Center(MCCC), where I co-facilitated weekly men's circle groups. Ka Ipu Ha'a gives incarcerated men and women the space to express their stories, emotions, and feelings they carry due to being incarcerated. The group offers a non-judgemental space where healing can take place. In addition, Ka Ipu Ha'a shares tools such as meditation and mindfulness techniques to help men and women deal with their emotional state healthily.

The majority of men in our groups were happy to participate in all activities and share their stories and emotional and mental states. In addition, they were grateful to have a chance to connect to other incarcerated men in a safe and non-judgmental environment, meditate, and learn other mindfulness techniques. Most men expressed that the group gave them tools to deal with emotional activation and gave them tools to regulate their emotions. In addition to the positive feedback from the men participating in our group, staff in MCCC expressed their gratitude for the group, saying that they see the positive changes that the group created with its participants. Working with the incarcerated population on Maui demonstrated the strong need for restorative programs for the men and women behind bars. I believe that our duty as a society is to provide those men and women with the help they need to reenter life outside of prison/jail.

SB 2774 appropriates funds to support the Huikahi Restorative Circles that have been operating since 2005. Huikahi Restorative Circles provides a solution-focused approach that has

been [successfully used in restorative programs by courts to reduce violence](#). In addition, Huikahi Restorative Circles teaches public health learning principles, and most importantly, it provides healing to incarcerated individuals and their families.

We must take care of all members of our society, and Huikahi circles are a great way to do so. Since 2005 there have been 52 Huikahi Restorative Circles. All 280 people who participate in circles (family, friends, prison staff/counselors, and incarcerated individuals) reported in a [survey](#) that the circles they participate in were a positive or very positive experience.

Please support this evidence-based program and help our community heal.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify,

Ohad (Amitabh) Amidor, Amidor@hawaii.edu

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

SB2774 Relating to Women's Community Correctional Center

Thursday, February 24, 2022

10:00 AM CR 211 & Video Conference

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee,

Aloha, my Name is Vanessa Visitacion, and I am a Social Work student in the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work within the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I am testifying in support of SB2774, which provides funding for the women's community correctional center to expand re-entry planning circles, also known as Huikahi circles.

I am in support of this bill because the re-entry planning process is shown to decrease recidivism and promote healing for families and loved ones. The Circles are group processes, self-directed, goal-oriented, and an active learning experience for participants. Huikahi circles facilitators utilize an evidence-based intervention called solution-focused brief therapy. This therapy is a strengths-based approach, and from my experience as a student social worker, I learned that strength-based approaches have better results within interventions. The circles are also client-centered; therefore, the inmates and their loved ones are their own change agents rather than the passive recipients of treatment directed by others. Client-centered practices have proven to create long-term changes if individuals make their own goals and plans because they are personalized. In addition, results have shown that the circles have assisted the children and youth of incarcerated parents in healing from the emotional trauma associated with losing a parent to prison.

A study compared 58 incarcerated individuals who participated in a Huikahi re-entry circle and 60 incarcerated individuals who wanted to join in a Huikahi re-entry circle but could not do so. The study comprised those who received the Huikahi treatment and the control group who could not participate in a circle. This study showed that the Huikahi circle participants demonstrated a significantly lower recidivism rate of 43.1%, compared to 58.3% for the control group.

The Huikahi Circle allows all parties to give voice to their own experience while collaborating with the incarcerated individual to create a plan that meets their needs for a successful transition back into the community. It is shown to decrease recidivism and strengthen 'ohana. Therefore, funding is essential to expand Huikahi restorative circles at the women's community correctional center. I am in full support of SB2774 and hope to see it passed.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Vanessa Visitacion
vv9@hawaii.edu

SB-2774

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 11:10:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/24/2022 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB2774 which makes an appropriation to further the practice of huikahi restorative circles at the Women's Community Correctional Center.

The Huikahi restorative circles program was started in 2005 and is part of the re-entry law Chapter 353H, HRS (2007), meant to apply statewide. It provides incarcerated individuals the opportunity to gather together with family, friends, and employers to create a strong, supportive and healing network and a solutions-focused plan to facilitate the individual's successful transition back to the community.

Huikahi restorative circles establish the foundation for a successful reentry into society and, accordingly, help reduce recidivism. This is a cost-effective way to reduce recidivism and reduce costs to taxpayers while at the same time increase public safety.

Mahalo for your support of SB2774.