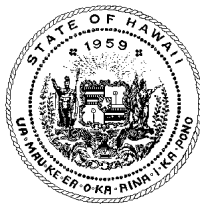


JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
KA 'OIHANA HO'OPALEKANA LEHULEHU
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Michael J. Hoffman
Acting Deputy Director
Corrections

William Oku
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1129
RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

By
Tommy Johnson, Director

House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 8, 2023; 9:00 a.m.
CR 430 and Via Video Conference

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports House Bill (HB) 1129, that appropriates funding for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women developed and administered by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice and offers the following comments.

As written, HB 1129 appropriates funding to be expended by the University of Hawaii Windward Community College (WCC) for the purposes of this Act provided that WCC may award grants to a private entity. PSD supports the training of incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for their peers, to provide college correspondence courses for women at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), and to provide reentry and transition services for women who wish to continue their education post-incarceration. However, PSD is mandated to follow education procedures that include TABE testing (a nationally recognized standardized test) to determine an initial Grade Equivalent (GE) level for each student, participation in Essential

Education's "GED Academy" that supplements the 4 sections of the GED exam with supplemental course work and related practice tests, and the administering of the "GED Ready" practice tests for students scoring 145 or higher on GED Academy. More importantly, PSD is an authorized test center under Pearson VUE and to administer computer-based GED tests, a Pearson VUE Certified Administrator needs to be present that adheres to the rules of conduct and certification agreement. Failure to protect the exam content degrades the value of certifications and puts our GED test centers at risk of losing the right to deliver exams.

Currently, PSD and Department of Education (DOE)/MCSA-Moanalua collaborate to issue Hawaii State Adult Community School Diplomas for students who pass their GED tests at WCCC.

To ensure the integrity of the GED tutoring and test-taking process by documented GED records using Essential Education's website provided at statewide correctional facilities, PSD recommends the appropriation of funding be expended by the DOE/MCSA-Moanalua that issues PSD's diploma's statewide or PSD's Education Branch, instead of the University of Hawaii WCC that may award grants to a private entity of whom may not adhere to the education procedures that are already in place at WCCC.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1129.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
MCKINLEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

634 PENSACOLA STREET, ROOM 216
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814

Telephone: (808) 594-0540 FAX: (808) 594-0544

February 6, 2023

Testimony on House Bill 1129

Measure Title: Relating to Incarcerated Women

Report Title: UH: Education; Incarcerated Women; Appropriation (\$)

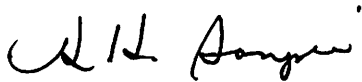
Description: Appropriates moneys to the University of Hawaii Windward Community College for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women developed and administered by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice. Authorized the University of Hawaii Windward Community College to award grants to private entity.

McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA) supports the intent of HB1129 **however**, it is important to note that each year, McKinley Community School for Adults Department of Education receives Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II funds designated to support employment preparation and educational services for incarcerated men **and** women in the Hawaii justice system to include GED. In addition, MCSA utilizes these Federal funds to purchase GED test vouchers for the inmates to allow them to take the GED exams at no cost to the inmate or correctional institution.

In collaboration with the Department of Public Safety, we have jointly prepared and provided for those incarcerated individuals who upon successful completion of the program and required examinations, receive a recognized Hawaii Adult Community School Diploma from MCSA, a Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredited school.

Currently, the Department of Public Safety in partnership with McKinley Community School for Adults continue to successfully provide for the educational needs of Hawaii's incarcerated men and women. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB 1129.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen H. Sanpei". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct dot above the final letter.

Helen H. Sanpei, Principal

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII’

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

LATE

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans
Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

By

Erika Lacro, Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 1129 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1129, which provides for education and re-entry of incarcerated women developed by Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice.

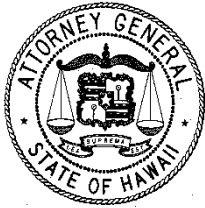
This program is not just a support program to help women study for and successfully pass the GED, but also builds and recognizes employable skills while helping the women transition on to higher education post-GED. WCC has partnered with Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice to promote educational attainment at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). Last semester, we created a certificate for those who complete the Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice peer tutor training program which recognizes the training and experience as a qualification for student employee positions in college level tutoring. During their incarceration, it allows them to serve as tutors both in the GED program and also in college level classes which they complete post-GED. Post-release, this helps students to find campus-based work in order to pursue their college studies.

In addition to supporting students academically to master the GED, this program helps students to enroll in college level coursework via correspondence or online in instances when there are not enough students to offer the class in person at the facility. This allows all students to progress toward their degree efficiently when incarcerated.

The GED is the first stepping stone for women at WCCC to be able to continue on and then benefit from higher education. Through the tutoring program offered by Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice, women have been able to attain their GED at greater rates and in shorter time periods than previously. Furthermore, they then work to support other women to complete as well. This cycle of achievement and giving promotes a better living and learning environment. Education has been shown to decrease violence and negative behavior patterns while incarcerated and lead to better outcomes post-incarceration.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1129, on the condition that any funds appropriated in support of this program does not supplant any portion of the University's budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1129.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

LATE

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1129, RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY AND VETERANS

DATE: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 **TIME:** 9:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 430

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Candace J. Park, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Hashem and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to appropriate moneys to the University of Hawaii Windward Community College for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women administered by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice. The bill also provides that the University of Hawaii Windward Community College "may award grants to a private entity to achieve the purposes of this Act."

Section 4 of article VII of the Hawaii State Constitution provides in part: "No grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law." Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), provides the standards for grants made by the Legislature; "grant" is defined in section 42F-101 as "an award of state funds by the legislature, by an appropriation to a specified recipient, to support the activities of the recipient and permit the community to benefit from those activities."

It is unclear whether the Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice applied to the Legislature for a grant and is eligible pursuant to the standards of chapter 42F, HRS. If it had applied and is eligible, the Legislature could appropriate funds for a grant to Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice by amending section 2 of the bill as follows:

"There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$225,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 [~~and the~~

~~same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025] as a grant pursuant to chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women[; Developed and administered by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice]."~~

If the proviso in the appropriation is intended to authorize the University of Hawaii Windward Community College to award administrative grants, because this bill does not include any standards for making administrative grants, the University of Hawaii Windward Community College will not be able to make the administrative grants intended by this bill. We therefore recommend that this bill be amended to insert standards for the administrative grants. Examples of statutes that provide standards for existing administrative grant programs are part II of chapter 9 and sections 10-17, 210D-11, and 383-128, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Additionally, we have attached draft standards to this testimony as a sample to work from, and we are happy to work with you on developing more specific standards.

If the Committee decides to pass this bill, the Department respectfully requests the Committee to clarify the funding provision of the bill to meet the requirements of section 4 of article VII of the Hawaii State Constitution.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

SAMPLE DRAFT STANDARDS FOR GRANTS

- (1) Any grant shall be used exclusively for the purposes of an education and reentry program for incarcerated women.
- (2) The applicant shall indicate capability to properly use the grant for purposes consistent with the education and reentry program for incarcerated women.
- (3) The applicant shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.
- (4) The grant shall not be used for purposes of entertainment or perquisites.
- (5) The applicant shall comply with other requirements as the University of Hawaii may prescribe.
- (6) All activities undertaken with funds received shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and county statutes and ordinances.
- (7) The applicant shall indemnify and save harmless the State of Hawaii and its officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims arising out of or resulting from activities carried out or projects undertaken with funds provided hereunder and procure sufficient insurance to provide this indemnification if requested to do so by the department.
- (8) The applicant shall agree to make available to the department all records the applicant may have relating to the grant, to allow state agencies to monitor the applicant's compliance with this section.

HB-1129

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 1:32:35 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/8/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikos Leverenz	Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) supports SB 236, which appropriates moneys to the University of Hawai'i Windward Community College for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women developed and administered by Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice.

HHHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals who are impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those relating to substance use and underlying mental health conditions and have been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / kat.caphi@gmail.com



COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, & VETERANS

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Room 430

9:00 AM

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 1129 - FUNDING EDUCATION & REENTRY AT WCCC

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun 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 4,074 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the “care and custody” of the Department of Public Safety/Corrections and Rehabilitation on any given day. We are always mindful that 964 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.

Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates the opportunity to share our thoughts and experiences in strong support of HB 1129 that appropriates funds for the education and reentry program for women at WCCC and authorizes UH Windward Community College to award grants.

Education is the route to economic mobility and since many Moms are imprisoned, programs like this are important to open up opportunities for woman who never thought they would go to college. Some of the women have offered compelling testimonies at committees about how their lives changed when they saw possibilities they never imagined.

Community Alliance on Prisons urges the committee to pass HB 1129 onto FIN with a strong recommendation that the program be sufficiently funded. This program is the route out of poverty for women and enables them and their families to dream.

¹ Department of Public Safety, Weekly Population Report, January 30, 2023.

https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2023-01-23_George-King.pdf

HB-1129

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 1:14:38 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/8/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tadia Rice	The Women’s Prison Project (WPP)	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB1129 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

The Women’s Prison Project (WPP) strongly supports this measure appropriating \$225,000 for the third year of the higher and continuing education pilot program at the Women’s Community Correctional Center (WCCC), which includes the very successful GED Peer Tutoring Program.

The first year was funded by a 2021 GEER grant and the second year was funded with a legislative appropriation that the state received in July 2022, but to date has not been released.

Hawai’i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ) obtained a donation to continue the program while awaiting release of the appropriated funds. The program is a collaborative effort of HFRJ, WCCC, Windward Community College (WCC), and the College of Social Sciences University of Hawai’i.

Research confirms that education prevents crime . Incarcerated people in Hawai’i have significant educational deficits. According to the state , the average incarcerated person reads at the 5th-6th grade level. HFRJ’s experience working at WCCC shows that many women read at far lower levels and are especially deficient in math. About 60% of WCCC residents are high school dropouts. Hawai’i suffers from systemic problems that often begin with children who have learning difficulties and lack positive school and social influences. The resulting disciplinary responses have contributed to the school to prison pipeline.

The unique education program being piloted at WCCC was recently described in a peer reviewed article , while another paper on its theory and outcomes is being submitted to another academic publication. The program’s remarkable results include 20 women passing the GED within 10 months of its application while the prison averaged only two women a year passing previously.

The program additionally supports higher education opportunities including college correspondence courses for imprisoned women; keeping WCC’s college counselor at WCCC; and reentry assistance for the women to continue their educations after release.

Almost all the peer tutors released from WCCC are in or plan to enter college. We urge the Committee to please pass this bill. If you have any questions about WPP’s support or the program please contact Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH, at lorenn@hawaii.edu or (808) 218-3712.

Mahalo for this chance to testify in strong support of HB1129.

Tadia Rice

On behalf of the Women's Prison Project

COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY & VETERANS
Honorable Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Honorable Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: Wednesday, February 8, 2023
TIME: 9:00 AM, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 430

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The unique education program being piloted at WCCC was recently described in a peer reviewed [article](#), while another paper on its theory and outcomes is being submitted to another academic publication. **The program's remarkable results include 20 women passing the GED within 10 months of its application while the prison averaged only two women a year passing previously.**

The program additionally supports higher education opportunities including college correspondence courses for imprisoned women; keeping WCC's college counselor at WCCC; and reentry assistance for the women to continue their educations after release.

Almost all the peer tutors released from WCCC are in or plan to enter college. We urge the Committee to please pass this bill. If you have any questions about WPP's support or the program please contact Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH, at lorenn@hawaii.edu or (808) 218-3712.

Mahalo for this chance to testify in strong support of HB1129.

Linda Rich

On behalf of the Women's Prison Project



Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans
Chair Mark Hasem, Vice Chair Cory Chun

February 9, 2023, 9:00 a.m., Room 430 and Videoconference
HB 1129 — RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

TESTIMONY

Laurie Tomchak, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Hasem, Vice Chair Chun, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii **supports** HB 1129.

HB1129 appropriates money to Windward community College for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women developed and administered by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice. The two organizations, WCC and the HFRJ, are strong forces in the community that have long provided education and counseling for adult learners. The HRFJ has international contacts with groups that help incarcerated people reenter society.

The League of Women Voters has long been interested in criminal justice reform. Program such as the one provided by this bill can decrease recidivism and help women and their children start new lives outside of prison. The first goals of the program are attaining the G.E.D. and learning how to gain the skills to find housing and employment. Some of the participants become counselors when they complete the program, and help other women to benefit from what they have learned.

The program is not a partisan and has been supported by former Governor Lingle and other prominent leaders. Please help incarcerated women change their lives and support HB1129.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



To: Committee on Corrections, Military and Veterans

Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday February 8, 9:00 AM

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 1129

From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) supports HB 1129 which would support a reentry program for incarcerated women in collaboration with UH and the Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice. Re-entry programs such as the one supported by this bill, helps women with a history of incarceration education support which has led to an increase in women getting their GEDs which allows them to continue their education which makes finding employment easier and more likely to be fulfilling both personally and financially.

HHHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

At HHHRC, we see both cis-gender and transgender women with a history of incarceration find it challenging to find meaning employment to pay for housing, food and other basic needs. This bill would support the education collaboration with UH Windward community college to support women in getting educational support to help them reach their goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center



LATE

COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY & VETERANS
Honorable Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Honorable Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
HEARING DATE: Wednesday, February 8, 2023
TIME: 9:00 AM, Via Videoconference & Conference Room 430

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB1129 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ) strongly supports this measure appropriating \$225,000 for the third year of the higher and continuing education pilot program at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), which includes the hugely successful GED peer tutoring program. This pilot program is a collaborative effort of HFRJ, WCCC, Windward Community College (WCC), and the University of Hawai'i's College of Social Sciences.

The first year of the project was funded by a [2021 GEER grant](#) awarded by the Ige administration for its innovation in assisting imprisoned women who suffer educational deficits exasperated due to the Covid pandemic. Out of 208 applicants for the Geer funding, 74 were chosen to present their educational plans to panels of respected community educators. Out of those who presented 31 were selected for funding including this project that HFRJ designed. HFRJ's was informed that its "proposal [was] among the top 1% of all applications submitted statewide" (June 30, 2021, GEER Project Team).

HFRJ is an [educational non-profit](#) entity that has decades of experience collaborating with other community partners to develop, apply, measure, and report on the outcomes of innovations to assist people in accessing justice. HFRJ's work has been replicated in other states and countries and is described in [50 academic articles](#), mostly all peer reviewed. HFRJ uses restorative justice theory and practices in its innovations, which are ideal for accessing justice. [Education is rehabilitation](#). It is well established that higher education is one of the [most effective](#) ways to decrease repeat crime.

The second year of this project was funded with a [legislative appropriation](#) that the state received in July 2022, but to date has not been released. The special problems with DOE disbursements of funds are recognized by the principal of McKinley Community School for Adults that received the appropriation last year. On January 20, 2023, she said last week: "I am hopeful that future allocations from the Legislature can bypass us and be sent directly to Windward College to minimize involvement of so many of us" (email from Helen Sanpei to Ardis Eschenberg, cc: Loren Walker, et al). HFRJ has continued the education project through a donation while awaiting release of the appropriated funds. The funds go to pay the peer tutors, providing stipends for women who

pass the GED and supervisor instructors who support the tutors and GED students, books, and other educational materials for the imprisoned women, college correspondence courses, and restorative reentry planning that include [healing for the children](#) and families of the imprisoned women.

Incarcerated people in Hawai'i suffer from significant educational deficits. [According to the state](#), the average incarcerated person reads at the 5th-6th grade level. HFRJ's experience working at WCCC shows that many women read at far lower levels and are especially deficient in mathematics. About 60% of WCCC residents are high school dropouts. Serious systemic problems, often beginning with children who have learning difficulties, are in special education and lack positive school and social influences, have contributed to [zero tolerance](#) strategies for student discipline, and resulted in [the school to prison pipeline](#).

The unique education program being piloted at WCCC was recently described in a peer reviewed [article](#). Another paper on its theory and outcomes is being submitted to another academic publication and a guidebook on how to implement the program for institutions is being drafted.

The program's remarkable results include 20 women passing the GED within 10 months of its application while the prison averaged only two women a year passing previously. To date and since October 2021, 100 imprisoned women have participated in the program. Forty women (about a dozen of whom passed the GED) were trained to be peer tutors for the program. Almost all the tutors released from prison to date are in college today. Currently there are 18 women in the GED testing process at the prison.

HFRJ has no role in GED testing at WCCC or anywhere. According to WCCC and PSD's education staff certified to administer the GED, the test is administered in four sections. Of the 18 women currently being tested 4 need one more test; 2 need two more tests; 5 need three more tests; and the remainder will be tested soon. The remaining women ready to take the GED will be tested soon. The GED test is highly proctored with valid results. Since the program began and to date there have been inordinate delays (totally well over six months) in GED testing.

In addition to helping women pass the GED and providing education materials for continued education at the prison, this program supports higher education opportunities including college correspondence courses; maintaining WCC's college counselor at WCCC; and provides reentry assistance for the women to continue their educations after release.

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

HB-1129

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 1:54:41 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/8/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1129.

***A'O AKU, A'O MAI...* We teach, and we learn.**

Aloha my name is Simone' "Nanilei" Kamaunu and I am sharing on how this program has helped me as a person, built up my confidence and helped me further my education.

I have been trying to get my GED for about 17 years. I tried books, taking classes in and out of prison, online, and in person tests but just couldn't get it.

While incarcerated recently at the Women's Community Correctional Center I heard about a program that will have tutors helping with GEDs.

This I thought hey why not I tried about everything else. So I signed up. And it was one of the best choices I've ever made.

The first day I was kind of surprised at how many others signed up too.

I walked in to this class not knowing how much this would change my life.

I was a part of the first group of tutees. The tutors were other inmates so this kind of made me feel comfortable to be okay with not knowing things.

It's a little bit more difficult when you don't want to seem dumb in front of strangers. Well for myself it was. That day I also met Loren Walker. She had a plan on a way of how the tutors would work with us and it was definitely different. After breaking off to where I fit in and where I needed help, it was personal. My tutor didn't judge me for how much or how little I knew.

After about a month of working with my tutor I felt I was ready to take my test. Again I failed, but this time I knew I had it in me. My tutor broke it down on where I was missing and we focused on that area.

Trying again I got it!! I passed. The team of tutors kept cheering me on and didn't let me give up on myself when I could of. I passed my GED within a two and half months' time of starting this program.

Getting my GED opened doors for me to be a part of cohort 2. And I became a tutor! The styles and methods of teaching and learning were working and I have had the opportunity of helping one of my tutees get her GED.

That felt AWESOME to be able to give back what was giving to me, that sparked something in me. I wanted to further my education and now was able to do so by signing up for college classes.

Taking classes, getting certified, teaching, helping others, and training cohort 3 & 4 have lit a fire in me and made me feel good. My confidence was boosted, I believed in myself and others, my family was proud and everything was falling into place.

I didn't want to go back to my old life style and I found a way that I didn't have too. EDUCATION. Being a part of this program didn't just help me with my GED, I had a job, it helped me set goals, rebuild my relationship with my 'Ohana through Huikahi Circles, obtain 6 college credits before leaving the facility, getting 2 different certifications, helped me earn money while inside, helped me set a foundation, helped with reintegrating in to society, kept me responsible and so much more.

Now that I have integrated back into society I am a fulltime student at Windward Community College pursuing my degree in Hawaiian Language. I am also a Hawaiian studies student assistant at Windward.

My family relations are healthy, I'm clean and sober, living my best life. This is all because of a lady named Lorenn Walker, who believed in the program and dedicated herself to help others.

That is definitely a meaning of true ALOHA! Mahalo nui loa for taking my testimony into consideration and lastly I ask you to pass HB1129 out of this committee.

Forever grateful,

Simone' Nanilei' Kamaunu

HB-1129

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 5:46:02 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/8/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelyn Reyno Yeomans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support for HB1129.

HB-1129

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 6:27:04 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/8/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Rost-Banik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Colleen Rost-Banik and I am a Sociology instructor at UH, Mānoa and have also been lecturing in Sociology through Windward Community College at the Women's Community Correctional Center for the past 5 years. Many women have expressed to me their fears about reentry and how difficult it is to go back out into society and try to earn a living when wages are so low, housing costs are so high, and there are so few supports for reentry. When people who are getting out of prison have little social support, the recidivism rate is predicted to be high. By offering more supports during the reentry process and helping women to be successful, we can also cut recidivism rates.

I urge you to support HB1129.

Respectfully,
Colleen Rost-Banik, PhD

HB-1129

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 8:29:21 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/8/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy Texeira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1129 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my support for HB 1129, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii Windward Community College for an education and reentry program for incarcerated women.

As a concerned member of the community, I strongly believe in the power of education to transform lives. The education and reentry program proposed by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice has the potential to make a significant impact on the lives of incarcerated women and their families.

By providing access to education and resources for personal and professional development, this program can equip these women with the skills and knowledge they need to successfully reintegrate into society. This, in turn, will reduce the likelihood of recidivism and promote public safety.

Furthermore, the provision to award grants to a private entity demonstrates a commitment to public-private partnerships and the belief that community organizations have a vital role to play in creating a better future for all.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB 1129 and invest in the future of incarcerated women, their families, and our community as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cindy Texeira

LATE

HB-1129

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 9:12:23 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/8/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diana Bethel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of HB1129 which provides funding for an education and reentry program for incarcerated women through Windward Community College. This pilot education and reentry program, developed and administered by the Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice, has been extraordinarily successful in producing an unprecedented number of GED graduates in its first year of operation. This has been a dramatic ten-fold increase from previous years. The program trains peer tutors to implement a collaborative learning model that stimulates a desire to learn and empowers the tutors to help other students obtain their GEDs. Once on this learning path, many tutors and their students are eager to pursue a higher education to create a new life for themselves. With the generosity and cooperation of Windward Community College, students are able to take college courses, both within the women's correctional facility as well as at WCC upon their release.

The program also assists women leaving prison by conducting restorative reentry circles that bring together a woman and her support network to create a detailed reentry plan. The purpose of the planning circle is to reestablish relationships, find ways to make amends, and define specific short and long terms goals for an improved life path. The goal is to reduce recidivism. The restorative circle is often a very emotional and inspiring experience.

Funds for the second year's operation of this invaluable, life-changing program were allocated by the Hawaii legislature in 2021, but perhaps due to bureaucratic inertia, the education and reentry program was forced to hobble along for months, without funds and uncertain of its future. Finally, a generous benefactor stepped up with funding to keep the program afloat.

To avoid this problem in the future, please pass HB1129 and bypass any bureaucratic roadblocks that would derail this important and cost-effective program.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Diana Bethel

LATE

HB-1129

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 5:05:46 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/8/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Taylor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice, in cooperation with Windward Community College, is making a meaningful impact for incarcerated women transitioning from incarceration. This innovative program warrants continued support.

Thank you.

LATE

HB-1129

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 5:34:07 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/8/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Davlantes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The GED is the first stepping stone for women at WCCC to be able to continue on and then benefit from higher education. Through the tutoring program offered by Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice, women have been able to attain their GED at greater rates and in shorter time periods than previously.

This program maintains a successful pathway to improved outcomes for incarcerated women.