

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



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OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR

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STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
(808) 587-4160

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

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair
Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: House Bill 451, House Draft 1, Relating to Incarcerated Individuals
Hearing: Thursday, April 6, 2023; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

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

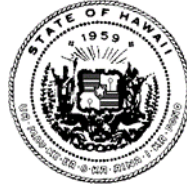
The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission **strongly supports** HB 451, HD 1, which would extend the life of funds appropriated in 2022 to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa Correctional Facility. This Bill would also appropriate additional funds for additional improvements at the visitation and resource center. Families play a crucial role in the rehabilitation of inmates. As such any network of transitional services must include meaningful reconnection with families, particularly if the inmate has children. It is difficult to have meaningful reconnection unless the families are allowed to have face-to-face contact in a suitable setting. Waiawa is an appropriate facility for this program, as most of its inmates are transferred from the Halawa Correctional Facility or the Saguaro Correctional Facility in Arizona, where there is precious little opportunity for face-to-face interaction between inmate-fathers and their children. Moreover, the challenges facing children of the incarcerated are well-documented. A visitation and resource center would help children deal with the trauma caused by parental incarceration.

The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission was created by Act 179, SLH 2019, to provide independent oversight over our correctional system. The Commission's statutory responsibilities include monitoring and reviewing the comprehensive offender reentry program of the Department of Public Safety and ensuring that the comprehensive offender reentry system under chapter 353H is working properly to provide programs and services that result in the timely release of inmates on parole. [See Hawaii Revised Statutes 353L-3(b).]

We urge you your favorable consideration of this bill.

Should you have additional questions Oversight Coordinator Christin Johnson can be reached at 808-900-2200 or at christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 4, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 451 HD1](#) – RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.

Hearing: April 6, 2023, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and defers to the Public Safety Department (PSD) on relevant parts.

PURPOSE: This bill amends Act 125, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, to extend the time to expend appropriations for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu, and makes conforming amendments related to the establishment of the department of corrections and rehabilitation. Appropriates additional funds to implement the pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

The House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans has amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the effective date to June 30, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Act 129 and family resource center working group met in July 2022 to celebrate the passage of Act 125, Relating To Children And Family Of Incarcerated Individuals, and Act 129, Relating to Family Resource Centers. In addition, the working group discussed how family resource centers connect the two Acts and sought pathways for further collaboration.

DHS requested the release of appropriate funds from the Department of Budget & Finance, which is pending. In addition, PSD requested the release of appropriated funds for Waiawa Correctional Facility and received approval for draft plans and other building materials for the child visiting center and family resource center. However, the final design is incomplete, and only renovations to the existing building are currently planned.

The working group met again in November 2022. Participants requested a virtual site visit to an existing resource center at another correctional facility. The group met virtually with the New Hampshire Prisons Family Connections Center staff in January 2023. The group reviewed Waiawa child visiting center renderings and determined additional renovations, including an Americans Disability Act (ADA) compliant restroom with a diaper changing station, modular structures, air conditioning, and IT infrastructure for Internet/Wi-Fi 5G access. These additional requests were not included in the initial request for appropriations.

In October 2022, DHS Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division (BESSD) posted a Request for Information (RFI) on home visiting programs and services to address adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) of parents with young children, which specifically included services provided to families with incarcerated parent(s) at public correctional facilities. Unfortunately, BESSD did not receive any plan proposals through the end of the RFI period that ended in November 2022.

The Hawaii's Children Trust Fund sponsored a special training by Blueprint for Change entitled, "Pehea nā keiki? And How Are the Children?" Responding to the needs of children impacted by parental incarceration in November 2022 with Ann Adalist-Estrin, director of the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers University–Camden.

The working group is considering a Call to Action to explore opportunities for the community to help beautify the area around the building site at Waiawa, seeking an overhead cover for the outdoor play area. In addition, group participants discussed ways to help the

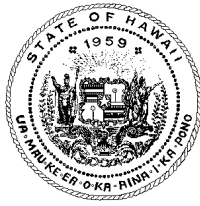
caregiving parent deal with the emotional aspect of visiting an incarcerated individual, pre-visit preparations, debriefing, and referrals for emotional support or other services after the visit when the family is home. Participants also raised issues around visiting logistics and family waiting time. The caregiving parent must manage the infant or child during the wait before the visit. Sometimes, the wait times range from two to five hours. Depending on the age of the infant or child, drinks and snacks are needed, a place to store baby bottles or medication that needs refrigeration, and a way to heat milk for babies, if needed.

DHS will issue a Request for Information (RFI) to seek interested community-based or non-profit organizations that would serve children and families of incarcerated individuals at Waiawa and potentially be accessible elsewhere. This RFI will allow potential providers to explore work on a correctional facility as the PSD completes building renovations. Then, DHS will post a Request for Proposals (RFP) for potential bidders.

The Department of Human Services requests an appropriation of \$350,000 to operate and develop the program curriculum and, with PSD, facilitate relationships of children and families of incarcerated individuals, including funds to contract 3-4 full-time positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Ka 'Oihana Ho'opalekana Lehulehu
1177 Alakea Street
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TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Michael J. Hoffman
Acting Deputy Director
Corrections

William F. Oku
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 451, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.

By

Tommy Johnson, Director

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

Thursday, April 6, 2023; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Via Video Conference

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

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) strongly supports House Bill (HB) 451, House Draft (HD) 1, which extends the time to expend appropriations for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu pursuant to Act 125, Hawai'i Session Laws 2022.

PSD has participated in ongoing discussions with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to determine the cost of additional renovations to the existing building that adds a new restroom with a diaper changing station that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), air conditioning, and an IT infrastructure for secure internet/WiFi access for staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony in support of HB 451, HD1.



HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Phone: (808) 489-9549

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Vonnell Ramos, President
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
Jefferson Gourley, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive
Director

Network Membership

Bay Clinic
Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i
Big Island Substance Abuse
Council
Bobby Benson Center
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i
Collins Consulting, LLC
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC `Ohana, Inc.
Family Programs Hawai`i
Family Support Hawai`i
Friends of the Children's Justice
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Get Ready Hawai`i
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Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.
Hawai`i Children's Action
Network
Hawai`i Health & Harm
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Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i
Ka Hale Pomaika`i
Kahi Mohala
Kokua Kalihi Valley
Kaua`i Planning and Action
Alliance
Maui Youth and Family Services
Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native
Hawaiian Health Care
Systems
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together
PHOCUSED
PFLAG – Kona, Big Island
Planned Parenthood of the
Great Northwest, Hawaii
Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana
Residential Youth Services
& Empowerment (RYSE)
Salvation Army Family
Intervention Services
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community
Center
The Catalyst Group

April 4, 2023

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz,, Chair
And members of the Committee on Ways and Means

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 451 HD 1 RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 451 HD 1 Relating to Incarcerated Individuals.

Children of incarcerated parents experience grief and loss, similar to the experience of divorce or the death of a parent. Studies show that children of incarcerated parents are at increased risk of abuse or neglect, and more likely to have mental problems, and difficulty in school. Children of incarcerated parents are seven times more likely to enter the juvenile or adult correctional systems themselves. Regular visitation provides opportunities to sustain the parent-child bond while a parent is incarcerated, which can alleviate many of these problems.

Prisoners who have regular contact with their children benefit as well. They are less likely to violate prison rules and create trouble for prison authorities. They are more likely to take advantage of rehabilitation and educational opportunities while in prison. Regular contact with children increases the chances of successful reintegration into the community when a parent is released from prison.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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

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



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Thursday, April 6, 2023

10:00 AM

Room 211 and Videoconference

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 451 HD1 - FAMILY VISITING & RESOURCE CENTER AT WAIAWA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Aloha Chair DelaCruz, 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 4,012 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 914 - 25.4% of the male imprisoned population² - 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 this opportunity to testify in strong support for HB 451 HD1 that amends Act 125, Session Laws of Hawai`i 2022, to extend the time to expend appropriations for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu, and makes conforming amendments related to the establishment of the department of corrections and rehabilitation. Appropriates additional funds to implement the pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

HB 451 HD1 continues the partnership with the Department of Human Services and the Family Reunification Working Group to create a Family Visiting and Resource Center at Waiawa Correctional Facility.

¹ Department of Public Safety, End of Month Population Report, March 27, 2023.

https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2023-03-27_George-King.pdf

² Why are 25.4% of Hawai`i’s male prison population sent thousands of miles from home when the following prisons in Hawai`i have room here: Halawa is at 76.9%; Halawa Special Needs Facility is at 62.1%; Kulani is at 47%; Waiawa is at 50.6% of operational capacity.

Maintaining the connections of families and loved ones has been proven by 50 years of research. Visitation, mail, phone, and other forms of contact between incarcerated people and their families have positive impacts for everyone – including better health, reduced recidivism, and improvement in school.

The positive effects of visitation have been well-known for decades – particularly when it comes to reducing recidivism. A 1972 study on visitation that followed 843 people on parole from California prisons found that those who had no visitors during their incarceration were six times more likely to be reincarcerated than people with three or more visitors. A few years later, researchers found similar results in a study of people paroled from Hawai'i facilities.³

This Center facilitates connections with families and their incarcerated loved ones, an important part of a person's rehabilitation and successful reentry. It will be providing games and toys for families to play together to create some sense of normalcy for families.

There is probably no area of greater consensus in the field than regarding the effects of paternal incarceration on children's behavioral and mental health problems. Although no one dataset is ideally suited to consider these effects, and obstacles to causal inference remain, research using a range of datasets ties paternal incarceration to greater behavioral and mental health problems in children. Although there is evidence for both externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems, evidence regarding externalizing and physically aggressive behaviors tends to be the strongest; it also tends to suggest that male children are more affected in this domain than female children.

These behavioral and mental health indicators are tightly linked with school readiness, and, as a result, it is perhaps unsurprising that children with incarcerated fathers are less prepared to enter school than their peers. Yet children of incarcerated fathers face even more impediments to thriving in educational institutions after they set foot in the classroom. Having been incarcerated promotes withdrawal from educational institutions on the part of their parents. In conjunction with the stigma attached to paternal incarceration in the eyes of teachers, this leaves children of incarcerated fathers in triple jeopardy in schools – unprepared, with disengaged parents, and carrying the stigma of paternal incarceration.

Given the strikes against them, it is no great surprise that children with incarcerated fathers are more likely to be held back in school, have lower cognitive functioning in middle childhood than their peers, and perform more poorly on a range of indicators of school success in high school.⁴

³ Research roundup: The positive impacts of family contact for incarcerated people and their families, Leah Wang, December 21, 2021. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/12/21/family_contact/

⁴ Assessing mass incarceration's effects on families, HEDWIG LEE AND CHRISTOPHER WILDEMAN, SCIENCE • 14 Oct 2021 • Vol 374, Issue 6565 • pp. 277-281 • DOI: 10.1126/science.abj7777. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abj7777>

A 2014 study of incarcerated women found that those who had any phone contact with a family member were less likely to be reincarcerated within the five years after their release. In fact, phone contact had a stronger effect on recidivism compared to visitation, which the study also examined.

Of course, reduced recidivism is not the only benefit. A 2020 survey of incarcerated parents showed that **parent-child relationships improved** when they had frequent (weekly) phone calls.⁵

The Family Reunification Group is composed of community organization, families, and concerned community members who have been working on this issue for several years. The group was brought together by Blueprint for Change and the Department of Human Services and we have been working with the DHS and DPS to bring this to reality. The group issued a report that is available to review electronically at the Department's website:

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>.

Maintaining connections with loved ones *IS* a reentry strategy that helps ease the transition from institutional to community life and back to family. Children are especially impacted by the incarceration of a parent as noted in the research.

Community Alliance on Prisons urges the committee to pass this bill and provide adequate funding to get this project moving. COVID and the supply chain impacts have had a great impact and we are now so close to making this Center a reality. This will be a shining star for Hawai`i nei. Taking care of families is part of our culture and this project will have long-lasting benefits for everyone!

Let's put an end to intergenerational incarceration in Hawai`i nei!

"Children are the living message we sent to a time we will not see."

John F. Kennedy

⁵ See FN 3



Papa Ola Lokahi
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

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Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone: 808.597.6550
www.papaolalokahi.org

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

Thursday, April 6, 2023, 10:00 AM, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

RE: HB 451 HD 1 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS
Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

Papa Ola Lōkahi testifies in **SUPPORT** of **HB 451 HD 1** as we support efforts aimed at cultural and person-centered approaches to rehabilitating incarcerated people, for which Native Hawaiians are overrepresented. This measure provides the time necessary to bring the pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility to fruition. Resources such as these provide a pathway for incarcerated people to have consistent contact with their loved ones in an environment that encourages visitation with family and keiki.

‘Ohana is an integral part of a person’s support system, and facilitating these connections is essential to the health and well-being of the incarcerated and the entire family unit. A family-friendly visitation facility may also help reduce recidivism when incarcerated people re-enter society. Frequent contact throughout incarceration may also help to reduce anxiety and stress when people transition out of the carceral system.

Concurrent measures such as this and SB 310, which allow for the creation of the pilot visitation and family resource center, are needed to rehabilitate incarcerated people and reduce recidivism in our communities. Multiple approaches, such as these measures, are essential to address people’s needs holistically. Additionally, we would like to lift up that the lack of data on the needs of Native Hawaiians within the carceral system does not allow us to design programs and interventions further. We urge the legislature to consider how we can learn more about the needs of Native Hawaiians who are incarcerated, as this knowledge is essential to resolving Native Hawaiian representation in prisons.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of HB 451 HD 1.

Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board, authorized by the federal Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, is charged with raising the health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, which we achieve through strategic partnerships, programs, and public policy.



**Blueprint
FOR Change**

“Blueprint for Change develops and supports community-driven services that promote the well-being of children and families.”

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

FROM: Shayne Kukunaokalā Yoshimoto, Executive Director

RE: HB451 HD1 - RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Thursday, April 06, 2023, 10:00 AM

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

My name is Shayne Kukunaokalā Yoshimoto. I am the Executive Director of Blueprint for Change, a non-profit organization with a strong track record for innovating and implementing effective support services that address the unique challenges facing Hawai'i's 'ohana. The organization's roots date back to 1994 when in response to a growingly overburdened Child Welfare System, the Hawai'i State Legislature created the Child Welfare Services Reform Task Force to develop a "Blueprint for reform in child protective services."

After several years of rigorous evaluation, the Committee finalized the core elements of the Neighborhood Place model. In 2000, Blueprint for Change (BFC) was formed and incorporated as a nonprofit organization to serve as the Department of Human Services, master contractor for Neighborhood Place services, and to continue the Committee's effort to improve the responsiveness of the State of Hawai'i – Child Welfare System.

By maintaining fluid relationships between state agencies, local service providers, and community advocates, Blueprint for Change, and the Neighborhood Place Partnership can significantly improve the responsiveness of the state's Child Welfare System while reducing instances of child abuse and neglect.

As part of the oversight of the (7) NP across the state, BFC collects Quarterly Activity Reports (QAR), which are designed to inform services, procedures, and practices moving forward. In 2013 the QAR showed a significant increase in services delivered to families impacted by incarceration. This led BFC to explore this issue further. Thus, the creation of the Family Reunification Working Group (FRWG).

The FRWG, which includes representatives from DHS, PSD, ACLU, Kamehameha Schools, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and several community-based non-profit organizations, gained support and interest through the Legislative Keiki Caucus and began meeting regularly to explore and advocate for solutions to problems encountered by children and families in the State who are affected by incarceration.

The following are reasons for STRONG SUPPORT OF HB451 HD1:

- Family-friendly visiting centers will encourage families to stay in frequent contact with their significant others who are incarcerated;
- National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society;
- Having the visiting centers staffed by social service professionals will provide families with opportunities to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, wrap-around services to address issues relating to poverty, etc;
- Visiting centers could also be staffed with kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners who could provide Native Hawaiian families with more relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices;
- The bill provides an opportunity to begin breaking the cycle of incarceration that is generational in some families;
- The bill provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to continue the conversation about how we break the cycle of incarceration and not only help families sustain themselves but also save the State millions of dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs; and
- The New Hampshire Prison Family Connection Centers hosted a virtual tour for the Act 125, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022 working group, which provided a great example of our possibilities here in Hawai'i.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB451 HD1. Mahalo ā nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 1:35:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shy Helm	Testifying for Blueprint for Change	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

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

FROM: Shy Helm

RE: HB451 HD1 - RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Thursday, April 06, 2023, 10:00 AM

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

The following are reasons for **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB451 HD1:

- In discussions with PSD, the renovation costs related to improving the designated Visiting and Resource Center site have increased significantly. An additional appropriation to PSD is necessary to renovate the Visiting and Resource Center site.
- Family-friendly visiting centers will encourage families to stay in frequent contact with their significant others who are incarcerated;

- National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society;
- Having the visiting centers staffed by social service professionals will provide families with opportunities to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, wrap-around services to address issues relating to poverty, etc.;
- Visiting centers could also be staffed with kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners who could provide Native Hawaiian families with more relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices;
- The bill provides an opportunity to begin breaking the cycle of incarceration that is generational in some families;
- The bill provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to continue the conversation about how we break the cycle of incarceration and not only help families sustain themselves but also save the State millions of dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs; and
- The State of California has successfully operated visiting centers like those being proposed by the bill for over thirty years. These centers are operated by a non-profit social service organization called Friends Outside.
- The New Hampshire Prison Family Connection Centers hosted a virtual tour for the Act 125, Session Lawns of Hawai'i 2022 working group, which provided a great example of the possibilities here in Hawai'i.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB451 HD1. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.



April 3, 2023

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

FROM: Jamee Miller, EdD., LSW
President & Co-Founder
'Ekolu Mea Nui

SUBJECT: House Bill 451 HD 1, Relating to Incarcerated Individuals
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, April 6, 2023, 10:00 AM Conference Room 211 & Video Conference

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

'Ekolu Mea Nui testifies in strong SUPPORT of HB 451 HD 1. As an organization founded upon lived experience, we know that 'ohana connections are intrinsic to a successful re-entry into society by incarcerated individuals. We also know that methods supporting Native Hawaiian practices such as Alo i Ke Alo (face to face encounters) are healthy for healing journeys. This measure allows the carceral system in Hawai'i to monitor, assess and collect the data necessary to make the improvements and normalize a community and evidence-based driven solution. 'Ekolu Mea Nui has been a supporter of visitation centers since this concept was first introduced years ago through the Keiki caucus. We continue to advocate for the advancement of this measure where public and private partnerships are necessary to implement sustainable changes that benefit everyone in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of HB 451 HD 1,

Jamee Miller, EdD, LSW
President & Co-Founder
(808)430-3380 Jamee@ekolumeanui.org



Hawai'i

Committee: Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, April 6, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
Re: **Support of H.B. 451, H.D.1, Relating to Incarcerated Individuals (Pilot Visitation and Family Resource Center)**

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

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i ("ACLU of Hawai'i") **supports H.B. 451 H.D.1**. This bill proposes to amend Act 125 and extend the timeline to expend appropriations for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa prison on O'ahu, and appropriates additional funds.

The ACLU of Hawai'i is committed to transforming Hawaii's criminal legal system and building a new vision of safety and justice. We advocate for the State to shift spending priorities away from mass criminalization and incarceration that disparately impacts Native Hawaiians, other people of color, and low-income people towards health care, housing, education and human services in our communities. Simultaneously, we advocate for humane conditions of confinement, and comprehensive re-entry support services that starts from the first day of incarceration.

The proposed pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa is based on an acknowledgement that the effects of incarceration ripples outward, straining families and placing unfair burdens on children. This legislation aims to support families during a period of incarceration so that parents and children can maintain some degree of connection even through prison walls.

Decades of research conclusively demonstrates that family contact during incarceration provides many benefits, both during incarceration and the reentry period.¹ These include:

- reducing recidivism
- improving physical and psychological health
- improving behavior (reducing misconduct)

¹ Research roundup: *The Positive Impacts of Family Contact for Incarcerated People and their Families*, Prison Policy Initiative (December 2021). [https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/12/21/family_contact/#:~:text=In%202008%2C%20researchers%20found%20that,recidivism%20was%20defined%20as%20reconviction\).&text=Visitation%20is%20also%20correlated%20with%20adherence%20to%20prison%20rules.](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/12/21/family_contact/#:~:text=In%202008%2C%20researchers%20found%20that,recidivism%20was%20defined%20as%20reconviction).&text=Visitation%20is%20also%20correlated%20with%20adherence%20to%20prison%20rules.)

- improving family relationships

As noted by the R Street Institute, “Supportive family relationships can promote psychological and physiological health for incarcerated people and their loved ones, at a time when everyone’s health is otherwise deteriorating. When done well, visitation can ease anxiety in children and mitigate some of the impacts on strained interpersonal relationships. Serving families at this most critical period simply makes communities healthier.”²

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. 451, H.D. 1.

Sincerely,

Carrie Ann Shirota

Carrie Ann Shirota
Policy Director
ACLU of Hawai‘i

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American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai‘i
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² The Importance of Supporting Family Connections to Ensure Successful Re-Entry, *R STREET SHORTS*, Emily Mooney and Nila Bala, October 2018.
<https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Final-Short-No.-63-1.pdf>

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Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Senator Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB451 HD1, relating to incarcerated individuals
10:00 a.m., Apr. 6, 2023

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of House Bill 451 HD1, relating to incarcerated individuals.

Incarceration can have significant impacts on families and especially young children. Keiki whose parents are involved in the criminal justice system may face greater mental health, behavioral, education and economic hardships. The National Institute for Justice has noted children are better able to weather these difficulties if they have a strong support system. For some children, having sustained, positive connections with their incarcerated parents helps them build that strong support system. Correctional facilities can play an important role then in supporting children and their families. They can provide spaces that are family friendly to facilitate these more positive connections.

This bill helps continue the good work that has already begun. The visitation and family resource center will yield numerous positive outcomes. Frequent contact between incarcerated individuals and their families can help children build resilience. It can also help an incarcerated individual build their own resilience, reducing their likelihood of recidivism. The center will also help families build their social network by connecting them to services, guidance, counseling and more.

We need HB451 HD1 to continue the conversations and work state and community partners have begun to break the intergenerational cycle of incarceration. **Please advance this important measure.**

Mahalo,

Ke'ōpū Reelitz
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 9:27:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Esther Geil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill and hope that you will pass it.

Thank you for your help!

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 10:08:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Polk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee

Thank you for hearing HB451 to support the Family Visitation and Resource Center at Wahiawa CCC. Preservation of family ties and especially the ability for people in jail to maintain their relationship with their children, are major contributors to reducing recidivism. This bill will ultimately save the State money, by helping reduce the number of incarcerated people. It is only too bad that this will be happening now only at Wahiawa, but at least it's a start..

Please pass HB451.

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 10:12:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Carla Allison and I strongly support HB451 because data shows that keeping loved ones connected is a vital element for successful reentry. Our entire community benefits when resources are targeted at rehabilitation in our correctional facilities. Please support HB451 and provide adequate funding for implementation . Thank you!

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 11:31:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Carolyn Eaton. I am a resident of Honolulu and have a special interest in affairs affecting the men and women Hawaii holds in custody in our prisons and jails.

I favor the passage of this bill to move forward on the realization of Waiawa's Family Visiting and Resource Center. Approval of this additional funding, with extension of the deadline to spend the funds approved during last Session, will afford us evidence of the strength of our communities and the real long term benefits of fostering, as opposed to stifling, the links with family for individuals in State custody. As a pilot program, it can demonstrate the wisdom of partnering with community in this this way.

Mahalo for scheduling this bill for hearing and for your consideration of my support.

Dr. Kathleen O'Dell, Hawai'i 'Ohana Support Network Coordinator

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

RE: HB451 HD1 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

POSITION: **STRONG SUPPORT**

Thursday, April 06, 2023, 10:00 AM

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

The following are reasons for **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB451 HD1:

- In discussions with PSD, the renovation costs related to improving the designated Visiting and Resource Center site have increased significantly. An additional appropriation to PSD is necessary to renovate the Visiting and Resource Center site.
- Family-friendly visiting centers will encourage families to stay in frequent contact with their significant others who are incarcerated;
- National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society;
- Having the visiting centers staffed by social service professionals will provide families with opportunities to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, wrap-around services to address issues relating to poverty, etc.;
- Visiting centers could also be staffed with kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners who could provide Native Hawaiian families with more relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices;
- The bill provides an opportunity to begin breaking the cycle of incarceration that is generational in some families;
- The bill provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to continue the conversation about how we break the cycle of incarceration and not only help families sustain themselves but also save the State millions of dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs; and
- The State of California has successfully operated visiting centers like those being proposed by the bill for over thirty years. These centers are operated by a non-profit social service organization called Friends Outside.

- The New Hampshire Prison Family Connection Centers hosted a virtual tour for the Act 125, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022 working group, which provided a great example of the possibilities here in Hawai'i.

We strongly urge the committee to pass HB451 HD1. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Kathleen O'Dell, PhD
Hawai'i 'Ohana Support Network Coordinator
drkatodell@gmail.com

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

FROM: La Vonne Richardson

RE: HB451 HD1 - RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Thursday, April 06, 2023
10:00 AM

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

The following are reasons for **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB451 HD1:

- In discussions with PSD, the renovation costs related to improving the designated Visiting and Resource Center site have increased significantly. An additional appropriation to PSD is necessary to renovate the Visiting and Resource Center site;
- Family-friendly visiting centers will encourage families to stay in frequent contact with their significant others who are incarcerated;
- National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society;
- Having the visiting centers staffed by social service professionals will provide families with opportunities to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, wrap-around services to address issues relating to poverty, etc.;
- Visiting centers could also be staffed with kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners who could provide Native Hawaiian families with more relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices;
- The bill provides an opportunity to begin breaking the cycle of incarceration that is generational in some families;
- The bill provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to continue the conversation about how we break the cycle of incarceration and not only help families sustain themselves but also save the State millions of dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs; and

- The State of California has successfully operated visiting centers like those being proposed by the bill for over thirty years. These centers are operated by a non-profit social service organization called Friends Outside;
- The New Hampshire Prison Family Connection Centers hosted a virtual tour for the Act 125, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022 working group, which provided a great example of the possibilities here in Hawai'i.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB451 HD1.

Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 12:58:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

Strong support for HB451 HD1

HB451 HD1 amends Act 125 (2022) to extend the time to expend appropriations for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu. It also will provide the necessary additional funds to implement the pilot project.

The best way to reduce Hawai‘i’s high rate of recidivism is by strengthening family ties, i.e., the social support networks that enable individuals released from prison to be successful in reentering back into our communities. This project is exactly what is needed to accomplish this goal. An important secondary goal is to provide assistance to families impacted by incarceration of a family member.

By helping the family manage such a drastic change in its economic status and family relationships, family ties between incarcerated individuals and their families can be maintained and the family can stay intact and healthy enough to provide adequate support to the family member who will inevitably return from prison. In addition, it will mitigate the devastating consequences that incarceration of a family member can have on the mental and physical health of both the spouse as well as the children. Incarceration of a parent too often leads to depression, antisocial behavior, and intergenerational incarceration when no consideration is given to the impact on the children of the family.

This pilot project can potentially become a model for reducing Hawai‘i’s high rate of recidivism as well as demonstrate a successful example of PSD/community collaboration, if community voices are included in the planning. It will also have a significant impact in changing the culture of prison life, making our communities safer, and decreasing our criminal justice expenditures in the long term. It will be money well spent.

Please pass HB451 HD1. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 2:52:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deb Marois	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Please pass HB451 HD1 to to implement the pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility. Research shows that regular contact between incarcerated individuals and their families reduce recidivism, and the support can help break the cycle of imprisonment that plagues many ‘ohana across generations. Other states have successfully implemented similar strategies and it can be done in Hawai‘i too!

As a resident of Maui who works in the human services and public health sector, I strongly urge the committee to pass HB451 HD1. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Deb Marois, Makawao

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 11:22:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristine Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for scheduling this hearing for HB451 HD1. The Family Visiting and Resource Center in Waiawa will increase the likelihood people who have been incarcerated will have successful transitions to their families and communities. Please pass this bill to help families and reduce recidivism. Thank you.

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2023 1:00:18 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alan Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB451, HD1 as this measure would extend the time to expend appropriations for the establishment of a pilot visitation and family resource center at Waiawa correctional facility on Oahu. Moreover, this bill will allow for conforming amendments related to the establishment of the department of corrections and rehabilitation. The ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism significantly and ensure healing and the end result should be healthy families.

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2023 1:32:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Chow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB451, HD1

This bill would extend the life of funds appropriated in 2022 to establish a pilot visitation and family resource center at the Waiawa Correctional Facility. This Bill would also appropriate additional funds for additional improvements at the visitation and resource center. Families play a crucial role in the rehabilitation of inmates. As such any network of transitional services must include meaningful reconnection with families, particularly if the inmate has children.

This bill will provide a stronger family unit between inmates and their loved ones and help inmates transfer out of the correctional facility knowing they have a loving family to waiting for them. This bill will help to reduce recidivism and therefore will reduce crime.

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2023 1:35:37 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Sims	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB451, HD1

Incarceration can have significant impacts on families and especially young children. Keiki whose parents are involved in the criminal justice system may face greater mental health, behavioral, education and economic hardships. The National Institute for Justice has noted children are better able to weather these difficulties if they have a strong support system. For some children, having sustained, positive connections with their incarcerated parents helps them build that strong support system. Correctional facilities can play an important role then in supporting children and their families. They can provide spaces that are family friendly to facilitate these more positive connections.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2023 1:37:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jasmine Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB451, HD1

The data confirms that family-friendly visiting centers will encourage families to stay in frequent contact with their significant others who are incarcerated. Also, National data shows that incarcerated individuals who maintain regular contact with their children and families are less likely to recidivate when they reenter society. Therefore, this bill will help to reduce recidivism which of course reduces crime as well as taxpayer costs to cover our inmates.

Having the visiting centers staffed by social service professionals will provide families with opportunities to receive information and referral and resource linkage services, guidance and counseling, wrap-around services to address issues relating to poverty, which will ultimately have better outcomes for our people.

Visiting centers could also be staffed with kupuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners who could provide Native Hawaiian families with more relevant cultural counseling and problem-solving practices.

The bill provides an opportunity to begin breaking the cycle of incarceration that is generational in some families.

For these reasons, I am in support of this bill.

HB-451-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2023 8:17:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Simone Kamaunu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this.

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Keith Agaran, Vice-Chair

RE: HB451 HD1 - RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

POSITION: **STRONG SUPPORT**

Thursday, April 6, 2023
10 AM

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

Having been a member of HCR 205, the working group that was established by the Legislature to help create the pilot project for the Waiawa Visitation Center, I want to first say mahalo nui loa to all of you on this committee who supported the creation of the pilot project in past sessions. Your support is much appreciated, and those of us on the working group believe it will lead to us breaking the cycle of incarceration in our State.

But, your support is still needed this session. In discussion with staff from the Department of Corrections during the interim, it has come to our attention that the renovation costs related to improving the designated Visiting and Resource Center site have increased significantly. An additional appropriation to PSD is necessary to renovate the Visiting and Resource Center site. HB 451 HD1 includes an appropriation that we believe is sufficient to cover the increase of cost that has occurred over the past year.

The bill also extends the life of the HCR 205 Working group which provides all stakeholders with the opportunity to continue the conversation about how we break the cycle of incarceration and not only help families sustain themselves but also save the State millions of dollars in the future by reducing our prison population and welfare costs.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB451 HD1. Mahalo a nui loa for the opportunity to testify.