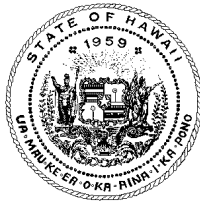


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'opalekana Lehulehu*  
1177 Alakea Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**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 SENATE BILL 710, SENATE DRAFT 2  
RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

By

Tommy Johnson, Director  
Department of Public Safety

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

Wednesday, March 15, 2023; 10:00 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 Senate Bill (SB) 710, Senate Draft (SD) 2, which appropriates funding requiring McKinley Community School for Adults Moanalua Campus (MCSA) to work with Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ) to provide counseling services for incarcerated women participating in the education and reentry program for incarcerated women and offers the following comments.

As written, SB 710 SD2 requires MCSA to work with HFRJ to provide counseling services for incarcerated women participating in education and reentry programs that are developed and administered by HFRJ and appropriates funding as a grant pursuant to Chapter 42F, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), to HFRJ to be expended by the University of Hawai'i Windward Community College (WCC) to continue administering education and reentry programs.

PSD respectfully recommends the committee consider deleting all references to MCSA and delete references to a grant under HRS Chapter 42F, and instead create a blank appropriation for an education and reentry program for incarcerated women, to be administered by the University of Hawai'i Windward Community College. It is also

Testimony on SB 710, SD2  
House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans  
March 15, 2023  
Page 2

recommended that the funds be expended by the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 710, SD2.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/15/2023  
**Time:** 10:00 AM  
**Location:** 430 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
**Committee:** House Corrections, Military,  
& Veterans

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** SB 0710, SD2 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

**Purpose of Bill:** Requires the McKinley Community School for Adults to work with Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice to provide counseling services for incarcerated women participating in the education and reentry program for incarcerated women that is developed and administered by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice. Appropriates moneys as a chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, grant for the University of Hawaii Windward Community College education and reentry program for incarcerated women that is developed and administered by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice. Authorizes the University of Hawaii Windward Community College to award grants to private entities. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education supports SB 710, SD2.

The McKinley Community School for Adults welcomes the opportunity to partner with the Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice and Windward Community College to provide counseling services to meet the educational needs of incarcerated women.

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



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans  
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

By

Della Teraoka, Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs  
University of Hawai'i System

#### SB 710 SD2 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

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

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 710 SD2, which provides for supportive education and re-entry of incarcerated women, as developed by Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ).

This program supports incarcerated women to achieve the high school equivalency and then to continue on to college while incarcerated, as well as to further studies post-incarceration. In the program developed by HFRJ in collaboration with the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), Windward Community College (WCC), University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA), the General Educational Development (GED) test is just a first step to college going and lifelong learning. This is not a GED program. GED testing is offered by the Department of Public Safety and is paid for through vouchers from MCSA. WCC and HFRJ do not proctor or offer the GED, ensuring testing integrity and removing conflicts of interest.

WCC and HFRJ have partnered to grow students through collaborative learning and peer tutoring techniques, which not only helps women study for and successfully pass the GED, but also builds workforce readiness skills. The students learn leadership, collaboration, alternative strategy development and effective methods for promoting learning. Recognizing these skills, we created a certificate for those who complete the HFRJ peer tutor training program which documents the training and experience as a qualification for student employee positions in college level tutoring. During their incarceration, the certificate 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. This can help them to comply with post-release work requirements and to survive economically.

In addition to supporting GED attainment and leadership building, the program actively promotes enrollment in college pre- and post-incarceration. Students are supported to enroll in WCC coursework at WCCC. The methodology used also helps the students support each other in these college courses.

When there are not enough students to offer a needed class in person at the facility, this program provides tuition for students to enroll in college level coursework via correspondence. This allows all students to progress toward their degree efficiently when incarcerated.

The program then further helps students again when they are ready to transition post-release, counseling them on educational opportunities post-incarceration and on making appropriate decisions as they transition to re-entry.

The GED is only the first stepping stone for women at WCCC to be able to continue on and then benefit from higher education. Through the program offered by HFRJ, 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.

We urge the Committee to please pass this bill, which maintains a successful pathway to improved outcomes for incarcerated women.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 710 SD2, as long as its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 710 SD2.

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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

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



## COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY & VETERANS

Rep. Mark Hashem, Chair

Rep. Cory Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Room 430 and Videoconference

10:00 AM

### **STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB 710 HD2 - EDUCATING WOMEN 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 3,981 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars<sup>1</sup> and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety/Corrections and Rehabilitation on any given day. We are always mindful that 917 - 24.4% of the male imprisoned population<sup>2</sup> - 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 testify in strong support of SB 710 SD2 that has successfully assisted many women at WCCC to earn their GEDs and has developed a Peer Tutor program where women are able to serve as tutors to other incarcerated women seeking to earn their GEDs.

For many of these women, going to college was not even on their radar as they never thought they would be able to attain entrance into higher education. This program has not only opened doors, it has opened the minds of the women at WCCC to their abilities. It has helped them dream of a better life for them and their families.

Education is the pathway 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Public Safety, End of Month Population Report, February 28, 2023.

[https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Pop-Reports-EOM-2023-23-28\\_George-King.pdf](https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Pop-Reports-EOM-2023-23-28_George-King.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Why are 24.4% 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 75%; Halawa Special Needs Facility is at 60%; Kulani is at 44%; Waiawa is at 53% of operational capacity.

*“There is a logical argument for prison education: It is a cost-effective way to reduce crime and leads to long-term benefits across the entire U.S. population. In 2016, the RAND Corporation produced a report<sup>3</sup> that showed that individuals who participate in any type of educational program while in prison are 43 percent less likely to return to prison.*

*In addition to reducing recidivism, education can improve outcomes from one generation to the next. Research shows that children with parents with college degrees are more likely to complete college, which can create social mobility for families.*

*Prisons with college programs have less violence among incarcerated individuals, which creates a safer environment for both incarcerated individuals and prison staff.*

*The significant personal benefits of prison education include increased personal income, lower unemployment, greater political engagement and volunteerism, and improved health outcomes.”*

Some of the women who have graduated from this program and are now Peer Tutors have offered compelling testimonies at committees about how their lives have changed when they now saw possibilities they never imagined for themselves.

Poverty is one of the drivers of mass incarceration and education is the route out of poverty and onto the economic mobility track. This successful program has graduated 20 women with their GED’s and many are taking college courses in anticipation of going to college when they are released.

This is a dream that many women thought impossible for themselves and this peer tutoring program has helped them realize their own potential. This program is the route out of poverty for women and their families, enabling them all to dream of and work toward a better life.

Community Alliance on Prisons urges the committee to pass SB 710 SD2 onto FIN with a strong recommendation that the program be sufficiently funded.

Mahalo!

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<sup>3</sup> The Case for Correctional Education in U.S. Prisons, RAND Review, January 16, 2016.  
<https://www.rand.org/blog/rand-review/2016/01/course-correction-the-case-for-correctional-education.html>

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

Wednesday, March 15, 2023 10:00 AM  
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE Conference Room 430  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

**Strong Support for SB710 Relating to Incarcerated Women (with recommended amendments).**

Women's Prison Project strongly supports SB710 which appropriates \$225,000 to continue the highly successful education and academic counseling program at the Women's Community Correctional Center. The program is a partnership that includes Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice and Windward Community College and the College of Social Sciences, University of Hawai'i. The program includes educational counseling provided by Windward Community College (WCC), the very successful cooperative learning GED Peer Tutoring Program, access to college courses leading to an associate degree from Windward Community College, academic advising for women transitioning from WCCC, and facilitation of their post-incarceration enrollment in community college or the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

**Women's Prison makes the following recommendations for amending SB710:**

1. Delete all references to McKinley Community School and delete references to a grant under HRS Chapter 42F.
2. Insert an appropriation for an education and reentry program for incarcerated women, to be administered by University of Hawaii Windward Community College. The funds shall be expended by University of Hawaii Community Colleges.

**Why is this program important?**

**Research has demonstrated that individuals engaged in education while incarcerated and after transition to the community have significantly lower recidivism rates.** This program has had remarkable results including 20 women passing the GED within 10 months of its inception, while the prison averaged only two women a year passing previously. The unique education program being piloted at WCCC has dramatically increased women's enrollment in



GED preparation, applications for GED testing and enrollment in college courses. Women transitioning out of prison are continuing their higher education with the support of academic advising by the Windward Community College counselor.

Incarcerated people in Hawai‘i have significant educational deficits. By the state’s own reporting, the average incarcerated person reads at the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade level. The program’s experience working at WCCC shows that many women have significant deficits in reading, and are especially deficient in math. **About 60% of WCCC residents are high school dropouts. Without additional education, these women face difficulty finding employment.** If they find employment it is likely to pay minimum wage.

**Recidivism among women is often characterized by what researchers have called “survival crimes” related to poverty.** Faced with Hawaii’s high cost of living, women in low-paying minimum wage jobs are often unable to meet basic needs for housing, food, transportation, etc. for themselves and their children. Returning to low level, non-violent crime can be seen as a survival alternative. Women engaged in the collaborative program between Windward Community College, Hawaii Friends for Restorative Justice, and the College of Social Sciences have a better alternative; higher education and the potential for employment that will provide stability in their lives. The benefits of education go far beyond economics. Women in this program are discovering their strengths and their intelligence, and abilities. They are developing future goals and experiencing pride in accomplishments. They are learning to believe a different life path is really possible.

Women’s Prison Project urges this joint Committee to pass SB710 and appropriate the requested funding to Windward Community College.

Mahalo for this chance to testify in strong support of SB710.

Linda Rich  
On behalf of the Women’s Prison Project



## **COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY & VETERANS**

Rep. Mark Hashem, Chair  
Rep. Cory Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 10:00 AM  
Room 430 & Videoconference

### **STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB710 SD1 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN**

Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ) strongly supports this measure appropriating funds for the third year of this four-part higher and continuing education pilot program at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC).

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. HFRJ's work has been replicated in other states and countries and is described in 50 academic articles. HFRJ uses restorative justice theory and practices in its work. This unique education program for WCCC aims to motivate and support women in prison and after release to earn college degrees. The pilot program is described in a peer reviewed article with more papers being drafted.

#### **HFRJ recommends the following amendment to SB710:**

1. Delete all references to McKinley Community School and HRS Chapter 42F grant;
2. Add that an appropriation for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women will be administered by University of Hawai'i Windward Community College.

Because state agencies have submitted confusing testimony about GED and its testing at hearings on the bills to continue funding this project, we clarify that HFRJ has nothing to do with the GED. Its involvement in this project was only to design and pilot an innovative and more successful education project at WCCC for three years. This bill is to only to fund year three of the project. Year two was funded, but the funds were only released this month by the state department of education. In the meantime, the program has been supported with a small donation.

To date 23 women in WCCC have passed the GED within 12 months of the program's application, while previously one to two women earned GEDs. More women are studying for GEDs at WCCC than all other state prisons combined. Since October 2021, about 100 imprisoned women have participated in the program. Almost all the tutors released from WCCC are currently attending college with five enrolled at Windward Community College (4 full-time and 1 part-time). We urge the Committee to please pass this bill please and contact Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH, at lorenn@hawaii.edu or (808) 218-3712 if you have questions about the project.

**LATE**

**SB-710-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 1:03:48 PM

Testimony for CMV on 3/15/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Helen Sanpei	McKinley CSA	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

McKinley Community School for Adults supports SB 710 which appropriates funding requiring MCSA to work with Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice to provide counseling services for incarcerated women participating in the education and reentry program for incarcerated women.

**SB-710-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 4:56:37 PM

Testimony for CMV on 3/15/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
donn viviani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Donn Viviani, a Kailua resident. I support funding SB710 SD2. I believe the sound bite “When you learn, you don’t return” is catchy, but more importantly it contains a profound truth. The human capital theory is based on the idea that if someone is educated, gets a better job, they are less willing to lose that “human capital” by violating the law and putting that capital and security at risk. That makes sense to me. And this theory is well supported by the stark educational differences between the general population and those incarcerated. 18 percent of the US general population does not have a HS diploma, approximately 41 percent of incarcerated individuals do not. Similarly, while 48 percent of the US population has received some postsecondary or college education, only 24 percent of incarcerated individuals have received that level of education. These numbers are not random.

Studies have shown that prison education cuts recidivism almost in half. Where else can Hawaii get that kind of fiscal and more important human welfare return on their expenditures? I believe this is an excellent way to spend my tax dollars. Please support this bill

Mahalo

**SB-710-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 3:18:57 AM

Testimony for CMV on 3/15/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristine Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass SB 710 SD2 and provide the requested funding. Education and the experience of peer tutoring makes a better future more likely for those who are incarcerated—and for the families and communities to which they return. Please pass this bill. Thank you.

**SB-710-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 8:23:27 AM

Testimony for CMV on 3/15/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diana Bethel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of SB710 SD2 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 (HFRJ), 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 HRFJ program is strikingly different from the PSD Dept. of Education GED program. HFRJ's program trains peer tutors to implement a cooperative 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 also able to take college courses, both within the women's correctional facility as well as at WCC upon their release.

The reality is that the traditional model of education does not work for all students. Nearly 20 percent, or 1 in 5, young people in Hawaii do not complete high school. The one-size-fits-all, forced learning model of education produces shame, anxiety, fear of not knowing, which extinguishes intellectual curiosity. Women have said that their past educational experiences made them feel that they were stupid and incapable of learning, that they were a failure. But it would be more accurate to say that the educational system failed these students.

In contrast, HFRJ's pilot project tries to repair the damage inflicted by the traditional educational system. The cooperative learning model of education is a highly effective and successful, student-centered, active, rather than passive, learning experience. It emphasizes social emotional learning, creates emotional readiness for learning, and is solutions-focused to increase critical thinking. It also increases confidence and improves students' ability to articulate and share knowledge. It is hoped that the McKinley Community School for Adults and the Public Safety's Education Department can be flexible enough to recognize the value of this approach and collaborate in good faith with the Hawaii Friends for Restorative Justice for the benefit of the students and to continue the success of HFRJ's pilot project.

The program also assists women leaving prison by funding an educational counsellor position who helps women transition to Windward Community College. Other activities include providing such correspondence courses and reentry planning circles to heal relationships and chart a course for the transition to community life.

Funds for the second year's operation of this program were allocated by the Hawaii legislature in 2021, but were stalled in the McKinley Community School for Adults. To avoid this problem in the future, please pass SB710 SD2 and bypass any bureaucratic roadblocks that would derail this important and cost-effective program.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Diana Bethel  
Tutor Supervisor  
HFRJ

## IN SUPPORT of SB 710 SD2 601 Relating to Incarcerated Women

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun

10:00 am VIA Zoom

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee of Corrections, Military and Veterans,

My name is Caroline Whitesel and I am a graduate student in the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health and the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. My immediate goal is to earn my Master of Social Work and continue working with vulnerable youths.

The following information is based on my opinion alone and is not affiliated with the University of Hawaii or the UH School of Social Work and Public Health. I am **IN STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 710 SD2 601 Relating to Incarcerated Women for the following reasons:

- Partnership with McKinley Community School for Adults will allow women at WCCC a chance at **developing crucial skills that will pave the way for their future success** outside of the correctional industry. These skills may include vocational training, emotional regulations skills, coping skills, and many others.
- Restorative justice programs, such as Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice, engages in **evidence-based practices** that utilize educational client-centered approaches that allow incarcerated individuals to receive supportive measures that teaches them the necessary skills to **reduce recidivism**.
- Education is a crucial part of providing lasting interventions for vulnerable populations, such as those incarcerated. SB 710 SD2 will allow women at WCCC to develop **foundational educational skills** that will enable them to **successfully pursue their passions post incarceration**.
- Rehabilitative and educational programs, such as the partnership with McKinley Community School for Adults, will enable women as WCCC to access resources that helps them meet their psychological, emotional, and physical needs to **reduce their chance of returning to the incarceration system**.

With this in mind, I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 710 SD2 601 Relating to Incarcerated Women, because this bill will provide women at WCCC a chance at developing lasting coping skills, obtaining foundational education skills, and reducing their risk of recidivism.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support** of SB 710 SD2 601 Relating to Incarcerated Women.

Best,

Caroline Whitesel

[cmwhites@hawaii.edu](mailto:cmwhites@hawaii.edu)



**SB-710-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 9:59:47 AM

Testimony for CMV on 3/15/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Wendy Gibson-Viviani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill to provide education and counseling services.

Thank You,

Wendy Gibson-Viviani RN/BSN

Kailua

(808) 321-4503

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

**LATE**

## **STRONG SUPPORT OF HB710**

Aloha my name is Simone' "Nanilei" Kamaunu and I am sharing 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 into 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 Lorenn Walker. She had a plan on 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 have. I passed my GED within 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 given 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 lifestyle 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 into 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 this program that believed in me.

This has definitely been a life changing experience. Mahalo nui loa for taking my testimony into consideration and lastly, I ask you to pass HB710 out of this committee. Please allot funding to Windward Community College for the program.

Forever grateful,

Simone' Nanilei' Kamaunu