

The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Second State Legislature, 2024 Regular Session

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice-Chair

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 3:05 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

by

Trish K. Morikawa

Circuit Court Judge

Circuit Court of the First Circuit

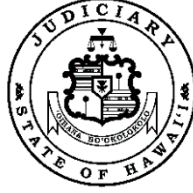
WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Concurrent Resolution No. 160, Requesting the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission to Develop a Strategy and Make Recommendations to Reduce the Number of Women Incarcerated at the Women's Community Correctional Center by Twenty-Five Percent Over the Next Five Years

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the intent of this measure and recognizes the distinct pathways that lead women into our courts. The Judiciary is committed to work collaboratively with the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission and other stakeholders to improve outcomes and divert women from the criminal justice system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2024 Regular Session

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 3:05 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

by:

Dr. Erin E. Harbinson

Director, Criminal Justice Research Institute

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Concurrent Resolution No. 160, Requesting the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission to Develop a Strategy and Make Recommendations to Reduce the Number of Women Incarcerated at the Women's Community Correctional Center by Twenty-Five Percent Over the Next Five Years

Judiciary's Position:

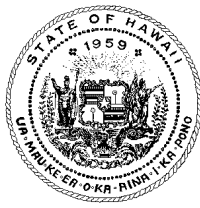
The Criminal Justice Research Institute (CJRI), which is administratively attached to the Judiciary, supports the intent of House Concurrent Resolution No. 160, which requests that the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission (WCIC) develop a strategy and make recommendations to reduce the number of women incarcerated at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) by 25 percent over the next five years, and respectfully offers the following comments.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 160 references a report by CJRI, "Exploring Violent Offenses Among Incarcerated Women in Hawai'i," which examined a snapshot of data on women at WCCC during September 2022 to better understand the number of women incarcerated for violent offenses. The state does not have a definition for violent crime, as such, CJRI examined data with the definition of violent offenses developed by WCIC and offense

classifications used by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR). The report found that according to the WCIC definition, 86.5 percent of women incarcerated at WCCC had no violent offenses related to their current stay of incarceration. When analyzing the data using DCR's offense classifications, 59.5 percent of women incarcerated at WCCC had no violent offenses related to their current sentence. Although there are varying approaches to studying violent crime, the data suggests that a sizeable portion of the women's prison population is not incarcerated for violent offenses and potentially eligible for diversion given the WCIC's focus on diverting nonviolent women from prison.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalu Kalaima
a Ho'oponopono Ola*
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and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 160

REQUESTING THE WOMEN'S CORRECTIONS IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION
TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE THE
NUMBER OF WOMEN INCARCERATED AT THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY
CORRECTIONAL CENTER BY TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OVER THE NEXT FIVE
YEARS

By
Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 17, 2024; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & via Videoconference

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) supports House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 160, which requests the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission to develop a strategy and make recommendations to reduce the number of women incarcerated at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) by twenty-five percent over the next five years.

The DCR stands ready to work with the commission, the Judiciary, the Office of the Public Defender, Prosecutors, County Police Departments, and other stakeholders to implement sound recommendations to assist in this important effort. To aid in this effort, the DCR also commits to reviewing our internal processes to ensure we are moving offenders through our unified correctional system as quickly and efficiently as possible without jeopardizing public safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HCR 160.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, April 17, 2024
TIME: 3:05 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

RE: HCR 160 REQUESTING THE WOMEN'S CORRECTIONS IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN INCARCERATED AT THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER BY TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante and Committee Members:

I am writing as a founding member of the Women's Prison Project in **strong support of HCR 160** which will help bring about a 25% reduction in the number of women incarcerated at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) by 2029.

Between 1978 and 2021, there was a 950% increase in the number of women incarcerated at WCCC, from only 19 women in 1978 to around 200 today. The Hawaii Criminal Justice Research Center's 2023 Annual Report says that 86.5% of the 200 women currently incarcerated at WCCC are non-violent offenders.

The Women's Prison Project believes there has been little progress diverting non-violent women offenders from prison, and the recidivism rate has remained at 50%, because there has been a lack of consistent and reliable financial support for proven community-based rehabilitative programs and because the state has never set a specific measurable goal by which it seeks to reduce the female incarcerated population.

HCR 160 seeks to address both deficiencies by tasking the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission (WCIC) to develop a strategy and make recommendations to reduce the number of women incarcerated at WCCC by 25% by 2029. It requests the WCIC to work with various state and county criminal justice departments and agencies as well as community-based organizations.

Developing a specific plan to reduce the WCCC population will produce better outcomes for the women, their families, and the community. It will also save taxpayers money. It costs \$250 a day to incarcerate a woman at WCCC; it costs only \$50 a day to serve non-violent offenders in community-based rehabilitative programs.

The Women's Prison Project wants to thank WCIC Chair Judge Trish Morikawa and Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Director Tommy Johnson for their help and support in drafting the resolution.

I appreciate the chance to share my thoughts with you on this important matter and request your support for HCR 160.

Linda Lingle
Women's Prison Project

Testimony Presented to the
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY
AFFAIRS

Chair: Senator Glenn Wakai
Vice Chair: Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 3:00 pm
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

HCR 160

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante and members of the Public Safety and Intergovernmental and
Military Affairs Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HCR 160 Requesting the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission to Develop a Strategy and Make Recommendations to Reduce the Number of Women Incarcerated at the Women's Community Correctional Center by Twenty-Five Percent Over the Next Five years.**

As the President of Chaminade University, a member of the Marianist community whose mission includes educating students for service, justice and peace and a member of the Women's Prison Project, I strongly believe in reforming Hawaii's programs and procedures for incarcerated women towards a more gender-sensitive and rehabilitative environment. It has repeatedly been stated that 59.5 percent of women incarcerated at WCCC were not there because of violent offenses. The 50% recidivism rate for women released from WCCC is appalling. While the strategy of holding women accountable for their actions and protecting the public from violent crime is understandable, there is abundant evidence that current correctional system policies are not working. It is time to look at a wide range of alternatives to incarceration providing a significant opportunity for incarcerated women to succeed in our community once they are released and which can provide financial savings to tax-payers.

The state of Hawai'i has never set a specific measurable goal by which it seeks to reduce the female incarcerated population. Establishing a timeline for reducing the number of incarcerated women is a good start. Female inmates are markedly different from their male counterparts. Alternatives to imprisonment offer an opportunity to rehabilitate female offenders and relieve pressure on the prison system. Increasing opportunities for education, employment and skills training, and increasing funding for transitional programs for women leaving prison benefit all of us.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue for women.

Mahalo,



President Lynn Babington, PhD
Member of the Women's Prison Project



Committee: Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at 3:00pm
Place: Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HCR160/HR139**

Dear Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee:

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports HCR160/HR139**, which requests the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission to develop a strategy and make recommendations to reduce the number of women incarcerated at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) by 25% over the next five years.

While Hawai'i has made some progress in reducing our carceral population over the past decade, without data-driven reforms, oversight of implementation and evaluation of outcomes, we run reinforcing the drivers of mass incarceration – instead of investing in proven strategies to reduce the number of people in our jails and prisons.

Between 1978 and 2021 the number of women incarcerated at the WCCC increased nearly 1000%. Sadly, that is not a typo. What's more, the Hawai'i Criminal Justice Research Center reported last year that more 86.5% of those women incarcerated are convicted of non-violent offenses.

Data also shows that Native Hawaiian women are locked up far more often than other racial and ethnic groups in Hawai'i, and that many of these women are mothers.

The proposed resolution aligns with ACLU's Smart Justice nationwide campaign to reduce the carceral population by 50% within 5 years and reduce racial disparities within our criminal legal system. To accomplish these goals, ACLU of Hawai'i released two reports with data-driven recommendations to shrink our carceral system:

- In 2018, ACLU of Hawai'i released a report titled ***As Much Justice As You Can Afford: Hawaii's Accused Face An Unequal Bail System.***¹
- In 2019, ACLU of Hawai'i released a ***Blueprint for Smart Justice Hawai'i*** to reduce the carceral population in Hawai'i.²

¹ <https://www.acluhi.org/sites/default/files/2018/01/aclu-of-hawaii-bail-report.pdf>

² https://www.acluhi.org/sites/default/files/SJ-Blueprint-HI_1.pdf

Hawai'i must prioritize pretrial justice reform to divert people, including women from our carceral system. Cash bail is over-relied upon and leaves legally innocent people waiting in jail simply because they can't afford to pay, not because they pose a risk to public safety.

We all want to live in safe and healthy communities, and our criminal justice policies should be focused on the most effective approaches to achieving that goal. But our current systems have failed us. It's time for Hawai'i to dramatically reduce its reliance on incarceration and invest instead in alternatives to jail and prison and approaches that are better designed to break the cycle of crime and recidivism and help people rebuild their lives.

In closing, ACLU of Hawai'i supports HCR160/HR139 and urges its passage as a step in the right direction toward reducing the number of individuals incarcerated in Hawai'i. We also recommend one amendment – increase the goal to reduce the women's population by 50% in five years.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Carrie Ann Shirota

Carrie Ann Shirota

Policy Director

ACLU of Hawai'i

cshirota@acluhawaii.org

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for over 50 years.

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i
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HCR-160

Submitted on: 4/15/2024 11:44:57 AM

Testimony for PSM on 4/17/2024 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorenn Walker	Testifying for Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice	Support	In Person

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Hearing: April 17, 2024 • 3:05 PM • Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

HCR 160: REQUESTING THE WOMEN'S CORRECTIONS IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN INCARCERATED AT THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER BY TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Mahalo for your public service work. Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ) supports this measure to set specific targets to help reduce the number of incarcerated women in our state. HFRJ is a 40+ year old non-profit dedicated to improving our justice system. We work to generate evidence-based knowledge and strategies to assist people harmed by crime and injustice, those who've caused harm, the state and federal judiciaries, other government agencies, non-profits, individuals, families, and communities. The result of our work is published in over 50 [articles](#) that are mostly peer reviewed. We are frequently contacted by others nationally and internationally for assistance with evidence-based programs and policies.

Having specific targets for the number of incarcerated people is part of [effective strategic planning](#). Specific targets help to operationalize a vision for the future. Our state prison system has historically lacked visionary planning, except to build more jails/prisons. The department's approach has been hugely costly both materially (over \$250 million annually) and socially (harm suffered by individuals, families, and communities). Our corrections department needs major changes. The same number of people today are incarcerated as in 2007 when our organization and others made a clear case for systemic change. Research is often ignored by those leading the corrections department. And while there is a movement for *rehabilitation*, the legislature must mandate specific goals, and monitor the department's work to ensure that this becomes a reality. We cannot afford to continue funding high levels of incarceration with its outrageous material and social costs. Despite Hawai'i's hard-working people struggling to find homes, etc., our state spends hundreds of millions on a carcel system that is ineffective (e.g., high repeat crime rates) and causes danger for the community (e.g., recent acid throwing case that allegedly was caused

by people who met while incarcerated—it illustrates how people learn from the criminal behavior of others while incarcerated).

If you have any questions regarding our position concerning our strong support for this resolution, please contact me at lorenn@hawaiiifriends.org. Mahalo again for your public service.

Aloha, Lorenn Walker, JD, MPH, Director HFRJ

April 16, 2024

Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Date: Wednesday, April 17th, 2024
Time: 3:05pm
Place: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street



RE: HCR 160: REQUESTING THE WOMEN'S CORRECTIONS IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN INCARCERATED AT THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER BY TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

Aloha Chair Wakai and Committee Members,

YWCA O'ahu is in **strong support of HCR 160.**

We have been serving Hawaii's incarcerated women at different points in our organization's history through various programs. Over the past decade, we have assisted several hundred women with their reentry efforts through our community-based work furlough and transitional housing programs.

Most of those who are held at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) are non-violent. Every single woman who we have assisted has shown some signs of trauma. Some of them do not even recognize the trauma they have endured simply because they had no other alternatives for survival. Given their history, providing a safe and secure environment where they can seek the care and support they need is paramount to their reentry success. It helps them get closer to living the lives they have always dreamed of.

Nearly 80% of our reentry program participants are mothers. Their success greatly impacts their family for years to come.

While they need to be held accountable for the actions they have taken, these women pose no threat to our community and they can benefit from the resources made available in the community where they belong and where they will eventually return.

HCR160 will be a good place to start envisioning an ideal environment for those who need healing, and we thank you for your support of this resolution.

Thank you.

Noriko Namiki
CEO

HCR-160

Submitted on: 4/16/2024 5:47:48 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/17/2024 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun	Testifying for Adult Friends for Youth	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HCR 160, which in part states “Whereas, the lack of progress diverting women from the criminal justice system can be traced to two failings: the lack of a definite, measurable goal by which to reduce the number of incarcerated women and a lack of resources allocated to proven community-based rehabilitative programs.”

Through AFY’s experience working with Oahu’s highest-risk youth, we have found that as an evidence-based practice, rehabilitation has been more effective at changing long-term behavior and reducing recidivism than punishment. Through rehabilitation, AFY has transformed the lives of countless youth and families.

As such, I strongly believe that rehabilitative programs and services should be offered to incarcerated women. Many of these women are mothers of children who continue to have an influence, either positive or negative, on their kids. By providing them with rehabilitation versus further punishment, we can help break the generational cycles of violence, criminal activity, and incarceration.

HCR-160

Submitted on: 4/12/2024 8:09:48 AM

Testimony for PSM on 4/17/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Virginia Hinshaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To truly show aloha, our State must reduce the number of incarcerated women. Doing so benefits Hawai'i in so many ways - enabling these women to work and support their families and return to their children to create a better life for the next generation = reducing costs and increasing the health and well-being of women and their families. All of this benefits everyone in Hawai'i. This goal is critically important so please support this measure! Mahalo!

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

3:05 PM

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference State Capitol

My Name is Linda Rich , I am a retired social worker and addictions treatment professional and I am testifying in Strong Support of HCR 160 REQUESTING THE WOMEN'S CORRECTIONS IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN INCARCERATED AT THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER BY TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

The majority of women incarcerated in Hawaii and non-violent offenders the majority of whom have addiction and/or mental health disorders that could be effectively treated in community settings with court supervision. There is a growing body of research in the US and internationally that supports the effectiveness of a wide range of alternatives to incarceration, especially for women with children. The current WCCC recidivism rate strongly suggests that different strategies are needed to rehabilitate Hawaii's justice involved women whose lives are often characterized by addiction, trauma, abusive relationships, dependent children, limited education or job skills, and poverty.

Research has shown that alternatives to imprisonment offer greater opportunity for rehabilitating female offenders and relieving pressures on the prison system. Alternatives may also reduce the long term effects of trauma experienced by children who are separated from their mothers by incarceration. Alternatives can be cost effective when compared to the cost of prison.

This resolution sets a specific target for 25% reduction of the population of the Women's Community Corrections Center (WCCC) within a clear time frame of 5 years and requests WCIC to develop a viable roadmap for accomplishing that goal. This resolution expresses the intent to actually create change, to bring about a real reduction in incarceration of women and find the strategies that will reduce recidivism.

The Women's Corrections Implementation Commission (WCIC) is uniquely positioned to achieve this task. The membership of WCIC is structured to bring together representatives of the Judiciary, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, as well The Chief Justice, or the Chief Justice's designee; A social worker who assists in the rehabilitation and attainment of housing for female inmates; The Public Defender or the Public Defender's designee; the Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Hawai'i, Honolulu, Maui, or Kauai, or the Prosecuting Attorney's designee; A former prison inmate; leader of a private foundation that assists women in rehabilitation after release from prison; and non-profit and community advocate representation. WCIC members have experience with the population, as well as knowledge of the various systems interacting with the women, the barriers women encounter and what is already working. The members are already collaborating and sharing insights and information.

I urge you to pass HCR160 with its targeted goal of 25% reduction in WCCC incarcerated women in 5 years.

Thank you,
Linda L. Rich

HCR-160

Submitted on: 4/16/2024 7:17:40 AM

Testimony for PSM on 4/17/2024 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Tom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante and committee,

As a founding member of the Women's Prison Project, thank you for the opportunity to submit my strong support of this bill requesting the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission to develop a strategy and make recommendations to reduce the number of women incarcerated at the WCCC by 25% over the next 5 years.

I look forward to your favorable passage of this and the future programs and potential these women will have in our community.

Sincerely,

Laurie Tom, M.D.

Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism



To the State of Hawaii Senate

15 April 2024

RE: HCR 160 Requesting Women' Corrections implementation Commission to develop strategy and reduce number of women incarcerated at WCCC by 25% over next 5 years .

Thank you in advance for your time. I strongly support HCR160 particularly after recently having filmed over the past two years observing, interacting with three wardens, staff, and the women who reside at Hawaii's Womens Community Correctional Center.

Critics no longer debate as to whether America's current system of crime and punishment has been historically oppressive to women of all races, but particularly harmful to women from indigenous cultures and those who experienced childhoods of poverty and abuse affecting an offender's trajectory through the legal system. We have seen and heard the evidence. As is, the cost of incarceration increases into the billions while recidivism stats for incarcerated females across the nation escalates.

We have long been in need of reforming our programs and procedures toward more gender-sensitive, humane and rehabilitative environments. What I personally have witnessed at WCCC is unique among other prisons in the U.S. We have less violence than most but we have much work to do and have only to look at what Mark Patterson accomplished at the youth facility across the highway from WCCC, to see that change is possible. He attributes the zero population of female youth (first in the country) to implementation of "trauma informed care" approaches and key programs that were suggested by some of WCCC's prison staff when he was warden at WCCC.

Now, with the vast experience of current Warden Noni Guillonta and with your support, Hawaii can build a 21st century model of rehabilitation not seen in many correctional facilities for women or men.

Yes, it is our responsibility to protect the public from violent crime, and those individuals who pose this kind of threat are subject to appropriate sentencing but let us consider that this bill will inspire positive change that affects all of WCCC's population. Concurrently, we will see a financial savings to tax payers, long term, with a prison that recognizes proven alternative solutions that do not exacerbate a woman's emotional problems and/or mental illness or drug and alcohol addictions, but in fact utilizes proven methodologies that lead to changes in human behavior, and ultimately decreases WCCC's population intake.

Hawai'i has always been unique among states. Our first prison was built in 1857, followed by Hawaii'i Island, Kaua'i and Maui prisons by 1893. With the introduction of capitalism and Western governance with its new laws and culture, the native people disproportionately fell into the criminal justice system. Gone for the most part were traditional ho'oponopono protocols for conflict resolution. In its place we saw rising statistics for incarcerated Hawaiian and local born women. Worse, is that the majority of their crimes are non-violent crimes perpetrated mostly by women who have suffered abusive relationships, many who are victims of sexual abuse during their childhoods and who reached puberty without having had any medical treatment. It is no wonder that many of the women who enter WCCC struggle with problems of alcohol and drug use initially used to self medicate. Unfortunately addiction leads many of them behind prison walls.

If we take a different approach, a new paradigm for re-educating and healing people rather than incarcerating women who have already been marginalized most of their lives and instead of separating them from their families and children, we invest in their educations, their intellectual and emotional growth, we cannot lose but can only gain.

This bill will be a start toward creating long over-due change in our community because we are all affected by how we treat inmates during and post confinement.

Thank you,

Edgy Lee
CEO, FilmWorks Pacific Ltd.