

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*
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
808-587-1288

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
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Administration

Vacant
Deputy Director
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Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2094
RELATING TO CORRECTIONS
by
Tommy Johnson, Director

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

Wednesday, January 24, 2024; 3:01 p.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 225 and Via Video Conference

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

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) strongly supports Senate Bill (SB) 2094, which seeks to require the department to establish a two-year pilot program to allow inmates incarcerated at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) to foster pets while incarcerated and appropriates funds. This measure also requires the DCR to submit a report to the legislature of the department's findings and recommendations regarding the pilot program, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session for 2026.

The DCR thanks the legislature and in particular this committee for its interest in exploring innovative program initiatives and looks forward to moving this pilot program forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB 2094.



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

2700 Waiialae Avenue Honolulu, Hawaii 96826
808.356.2200 • HawaiianHumane.org

Date: Jan. 23, 2024

To: Chair Sen. Glenn Wakai
Vice Chair Sen. Brandon J.C. Elefante
and Members of the Committee on
Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Director of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in support of SB 2094: Relating to Corrections
Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024, 3:01 p.m., Room 225 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for Senate Bill 2094, which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to establish a two-year pilot program to allow inmates incarcerated at the women's community correctional center to foster pets while incarcerated, requires DCR to submit a report to the Legislature, and appropriates funds.

Hawaiian Humane's mission is to promote the human-animal bond and the humane treatment of all animals. It is difficult to imagine a program that would more perfectly demonstrate that mission in action than the pilot project being proposed here.

Foster care saves animal lives. Kittens need time to grow before they can be spayed/neutered and find permanent homes. Ill or injured animals need a place to recover. With an average of 50 animals coming to Hawaiian Humane for help every day, we could not address all of their needs without the help of dedicated foster volunteers.

Caring for animals can also save human lives. The unconditional love and complete vulnerability of an animal companion teaches compassion and responsibility like few other things we can do in life. They need us and being needed can be transformative.

Hawaiian Humane is thrilled that the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is interested in launching this pilot project and we urge you to lend your support by passing this measure. Mahalo for your consideration.



Hawai'i

Committee: Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, Wednesday, January 24 at 3:01pm
Place: Room 225 & Videoconference
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i IN SUPPORT of SB2094 Relating to Corrections

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

The ACLU of Hawai'i supports Senate Bill 2094 Relating to Corrections, which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to establish a two-year pilot program to allow inmates incarcerated at the women's community correctional center to foster pets while incarcerated, requires DCR to submit a report to the Legislature, and appropriates funds.

The ACLU of Hawai'i is committed to Reimagining Public Safety in Hawaii. We advocate for the State to divert people from our jails and prisons and shift resources toward housing, education, health and human services in our community.

There is significant data to support the potential positive outcomes this bill could establish.¹ Pets can and often do have positive effects on mood and overall outlook. They can also help reduce stress.

As it relates to ACLU of Hawai'i's Smart Justice goals of reducing Hawaii's jail and prison populations², there is strong evidence that programs like the one established in this bill can help improve personal responsibility, self-esteem, and work ethics. All of which are important personal skills which can increase post-incarceration readiness for employment and can reduce recidivism.

For all these reasons, we urge the committee to move this bill forward.

Sincerely,

Josh Frost

Josh Frost
Policy Assistant

¹ A New Leash on Life: Benefits of Dog Training Programs in Prisons:

<https://lsj.washington.edu/research/undergraduate/new-leash-life-benefits-dog-training-programs-prisons>

² Blueprint for Smart Justice Hawai'i: https://www.acluhi.org/sites/default/files/SJ-Blueprint-HI_1.pdf

ACLU of Hawai'i
jfrost@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.

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UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA
THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

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

Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 3:01 PM
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on SB2094 – RELATING TO CORRECTIONS

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

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW provides comments on SB2094, which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (“DCR”) to establish a two-year pilot program to allow inmates incarcerated at the women's community correctional center (“WCCC”) to foster pets while incarcerated. This bill also requires DCR to submit a report to the Legislature and appropriates funds to DCR for program implementation.

Without specific details, UPW cannot comment on the merits of the proposed program, nor are we able to theorize how such a program will impact the individuals incarcerated at WCCC. However, we believe that current staffing levels are not adequate to support the current programs at WCCC. We are concerned with how an additional program, one that involves the care for pets, will ultimately impact the duties and responsibilities of adult corrections officers that are assigned to this facility.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kalani Werner", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kalani Werner
State Director

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SB-2094

Submitted on: 1/23/2024 11:33:09 AM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inga Gibson	Testifying for Pono Advocacy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Wakai and PSM Committee Members,

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in support of SB2094 to initiate a 2 year pilot program with the Department of Corrections to allow the fostering and care of pet animals in need, in coordination with local animal shelters and rescue organizations.

In my 20+ years of work in animal protection, I have seen the direct benefits of these programs, for human and animal alike, through similar prison pet partnership programs in Idaho, Arizona, Washington and Louisiana, and although the majority of states have long had such programs in place. In addition to providing pets in need with necessary care and socialization, these programs provide occupational/work opportunities to inmates who often go on to work with animals in a variety of fields, including in veterinary care and animal shelters.

We encourage your support of this measure that equally benefits people, pets and communities.

Thank you,

Inga Gibson, Director, Pono Advocacy

SB-2094

Submitted on: 1/21/2024 3:45:26 AM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Fukuzawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Senators:

I am submitting this testimony in support of this bill SB 2094. This seems to be a good rehabilitative measure for the female offenders in WCCC. They should have a similar program for the male offenders too.

Thank you,

David Fukuzawa

SB-2094

Submitted on: 1/22/2024 10:00:02 AM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helen Josypenko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of Kaneohe and a foster volunteer for the Hawaiian Humane Society, I fully support SB2094. Anyone who have experienced fostering understands the value that a foster program provides to families and individuals alike. To bring this value into the Dept of Corrections can only produce the same results.

Caring for animals creates a bond unlike one that many may have never experienced in their lifetime. To realize a foster animal is dependent on you for every aspect of their livelihood, creates a sense of responsibility, empathy, and self-worth.

By bringing a foster program into these women will have the opportunity to learn positive life skills and emotions in a positive, non-threatening situation. They will see the progress of their efforts and feel the value of their success. Over time these feelings will transform to who they are and they will start to become that compassionate, responsible person who may have gotten lost along the way.

Possible this program will provide them with the positive experience which was missing from their lives and touch on what can not always be found in a routine prison program.

Research has shown in so many ways, taking care of animals can improve a person's outlook on life as well as improve a person's ability to move forward with improve their abilities to be responsible and maintain a steady path of positivity. Please give this pilot program a chance. We won't know the potential of its success if we don't give it a fair chance.

SB-2094

Submitted on: 1/22/2024 5:44:19 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael EKM Olderr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I approve of this bill and I believe this kind of program should be expanded to more than just the women's facility, and have it expanded to juvie and the men's if not already.

SB-2094

Submitted on: 1/23/2024 11:48:00 AM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aria Juliet Castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This program would provide much-needed care and affection for animals awaiting adoption, creating a mutually beneficial relationship with incarcerated women.

SB-2094

Submitted on: 1/23/2024 12:00:47 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandy Shimabukuro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB 2094, which requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to establish a two-year pilot program to allow inmates incarcerated at the women's community correctional center to foster pets while incarcerated; requires DCR to submit a report to the Legislature; and appropriates funds.

Having entered into animal welfare first as a volunteer, then a foster to dogs with special behavioral/medical needs and neonate kittens, I can speak to the deep fulfillment and greater purpose that comes with pet fostering. It is an experience that has made me a better person.

Similar pilot programs launched across the country have proven to be mutually beneficial to pets in need, inmates and the organizations that support them. It instills compassion, empathy, work ethic and discipline in inmates, provides a life-saving outlet for animals, and helps to alleviate critical space and resource constraints for shelters and rescue organizations.

I am grateful to Senators Wakai, Aquino, Chang, Fevella, San Buenaventura, and Elefante, and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, for understanding the transformative impact this will have on the most vulnerable in our community, both pets and people alike. I encourage you to support this measure.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Brandy Shimabukuro

LATE

SB-2094

Submitted on: 1/23/2024 11:04:38 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Rich	Testifying for Women's Prison Project	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

3:01 PM

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Re: SB2094 Strong Support

Women’s Prison Project strongly supports SB2094, which would create a two year pilot program for the fostering of pets b women incarcerated at Women’s Community Correctional Center.

The fostering of pets by incarcerated persons has been demonstrated to improve the wellbeing of incarcerated persons, reducing depression and aggression. The presence of pets and the opportunity to care for them improves mental health, providing a source of connection, experiences of nurturing and responsibility. A more positive environment more conducive to rehabilitation is created.

We urge you to pass SB2094.

Thank you for your consideration of this step toward a more rehabilitative environment.

Linda Rich for Women's Prison Project