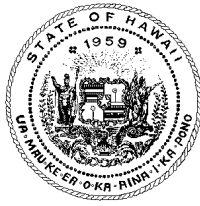


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



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

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Michael J. Hoffman
Acting Deputy Director
Corrections

William F. Oku
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 710
RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

By

Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Public Safety

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

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 15, 2023; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 and Via Video Conference

Chairs Wakai and Kim, Vice Chairs Elefante and Kidani, and Members of the
Committees:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports Senate Bill (SB) 710,
which appropriates funding for the education and reentry programs for
incarcerated women developed and administered by Hawai'i Friends of
Restorative Justice and offers the following comments.

As written, SB 710 appropriates funding to be expended by the University
of Hawai'i Windward Community College (WCC) for the purposes of this Act
provided that WCC may award grants to a private entity. PSD supports the
training of incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for
their peers, to provide college correspondence courses for women at the
Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), and to provide reentry and
transition services for women who wish to continue their education post-

incarceration. However, PSD is mandated to follow education procedures that include Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing (a nationally recognized standardized test) to determine an initial Grade Equivalent (GE) level for each student, participation in Essential Education's "GED Academy" that supplements the 4 sections of the GED exam with supplemental course work and related practice tests, and the administering of the "GED Ready" practice tests for students scoring 145 or higher on GED Academy. More importantly, PSD is an authorized test center under Pearson VUE and to administer computer-based GED tests, a Pearson VUE Certified Administrator needs to be present that adheres to the rules of conduct and certification agreement. Failure to protect the exam content degrades the value of certifications and puts our GED test centers at risk of losing the right to deliver exams.

Currently, PSD and the Department of Education (DOE), McKinley Community School for Adults Moanalua Campus (MCSA) collaborate to issue Hawai'i State Adult Community School Diplomas for students who pass their GED tests at WCCC.

To ensure the integrity of the GED tutoring and test-taking process by documented GED records using Essential Education's website provided at statewide correctional facilities, PSD welcomes the Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice to partner with us and the DOE/MCSA in meeting the educational needs of incarcerated men and women, eliminating the need for additional Legislative funding or funding through the University of Hawai'i WCC that may award grants to a private entity of whom may not adhere to the education procedures that are already in place at WCCC.

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



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

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 710, RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND
MILITARY AFFAIRS AND ON HIGHER EDUCATION

DATE: Wednesday, February 15, 2023 **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 225

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

Chairs Wakai and Kim and Members of the Committees:

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

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

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

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

"There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$225,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 [~~and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025~~] as a grant pursuant to chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women[~~Developed and administered by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice~~]."

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

SAMPLE DRAFT STANDARDS FOR GRANTS

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



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

634 PENSACOLA STREET, ROOM 216
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814

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

February 9, 2023

Testimony on SB710

Measure Title: Relating to Incarcerated Women

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

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

McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA) supports the intent of SB710 **however**, it is important to note that each year, McKinley Community School for Adults Department of Education receives Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II funds designated to support employment preparation and educational services for incarcerated men and women in the Hawaii justice system to include GED. In addition, MCSA utilizes these Federal funds to purchase GED test vouchers for the inmates to allow them to take the GED exams at no cost to the inmate or correctional institution.

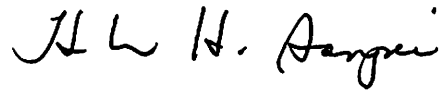
In collaboration with the Department of Public Safety, we have jointly prepared and provided for those incarcerated individuals who upon successful completion of the program and required examinations, receive a recognized Hawaii Adult Community School Diploma from MCSA, a Western Association of Schools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

In addition, we have in place the counseling support and necessary personnel to guide these inmates to further their education or to seek a job upon release. We currently are partnered through WIOA with the Department of Labor and the American Job Center statewide. For the island of Oahu, the job center is located at the Dole Cannery.

This job center assists with job placement to help reduce recidivism of released inmates. The funds that we receive and the staff that is already in place are currently sufficient in meeting the needs of these incarcerated individuals.

We welcome the Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice to partner with us in meeting the educational needs of these inmates, both men and women, thereby eliminating the need for Legislative funding to purchase staff to oversee their project. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony for SB710.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen H. Sanpei". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H" and a distinct "Sanpei" at the end.

Helen H. Sanpei, Principal
McKinley Community School



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM
'ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAI'I**

Legislative Testimony
Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs and
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 3:00 pm

By

Kupalokeku'upualeihiwaōkekau Kamohali'i, Peer Mentor
University of Hawai'i System/Windward Community College
TRiO Student Support Services

SB 710 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

Chair Wakai, Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members
of the Committee:

As a representative of Windward Community College (WCC) and TRiO Student Support
Services (TRiO SSS) at WCC, we actively support SB710.

As a former inmate at Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), I understand the
adversity faced and the resilience needed by those attempting to improve themselves while
detained. In 2019 I gained my GED at WCCC through McKinley School for Adults, and a few
months later, I was released from prison.

In the spring of 2020, I registered at WCC to continue my education. Sadly two months later,
Coronavirus shut down the world, and I was afraid I would not thrive at a college level. I took
the bus to school while residing in a transitional home for women with mental disabilities. I
studied in the back of the TRiO SSS building, attempting to lay low from authorities. The
Director of TRiO SSS (Roy Inoye) and the Chancellor of WCC (Ardis Eschenberg) assisted me
in gaining employment with an essential workers pass from the Governor of Hawai'i (David

Ige). With their support, I was able to be successful in my academic journey. SB710 will help others who suffer from multiple barriers while attending college.

I can state with pride that I received my associate's degree from WCC and am now enrolled in the first year of my bachelor's program at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. Numerous challenges between those enrollment years, including homelessness, family suicide, and financial necessity, were considerably lessened because of my support system.

I had to face these hardships without the assistance of Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ) and post-incarceration services. This bill would help mitigate and support post-incarcerated women like me and encourage us to strive for excellence. Mahalo for allowing me to speak on behalf of those still impacted by WCC's efforts.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

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

SB 710 – RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

Chairs Wakai and Kim, Vice Chairs Elefante and Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 710, 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, 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.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:57:37 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Dr. Lynn Babington | Testifying for Chaminade University | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

In Support

I am in strong support of SB 710, Relating to Incarcerated Women.

Monies for this program will assist in training incarcerated women to receive their general education certificates. In the 10 months the program was in existence, it has assisted 20 women. Prior to this program, approximately two women per year passed the general education test. Additional goals for this legislation are to train incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for their peers, and provide reentry and transition services for women to wish to continue their education. Chaminade and the Marianist Center of Hawaii have supported women in the Hawaii Women's Correctional Facility for over 20 years. We are in strong support of any transitional and educational programs to assist women in prison.



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

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: Wednesday, February 15, 2023
TIME: 3:00 PM, Via Videoconference & Conference Room 225

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB710 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ) strongly supports this measure appropriating \$225,000 for the third year of this four-part higher and continuing education pilot program at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), which includes the extraordinarily successful GED peer tutoring program. I am Diana Bethel, Phd, coordinator for HFRJ's instructors who support the peer tutors in this higher and continuing education pilot project at 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 to assist people in accessing justice. HFRJ's work has been replicated in other states and countries and is described in 50 academic articles, mostly all peer reviewed. HFRJ uses restorative justice theory and practices in its innovations, which are ideal for accessing justice. HFRJ is not a permanent service provider and only provides temporary programs in order to develop evidence-based interventions. This unique education program that seeks to motivate and support women in prison and after release to earn college degrees. The pilot program was recently described in a peer reviewed article. Another paper on its theory and outcomes is being submitted to another academic publication, and a guidebook on how to implement the program for correctional institutions is also being drafted.

Because the Department of Public Safety offered confusing testimony at the House hearing on this bill regarding GED testing, we want to clarify that HFRJ has nothing to do with GED testing. Its involvement in this project was only to design and pilot the project for three years. This bill is to only to fund year three of the project. Year two was funded as described below, but the funds have not been released.

Funding and pilot program's history

The first year of the project was funded by a 2021 GEER grant awarded by the Ige administration for its innovation in assisting imprisoned women who suffer educational deficits

exacerbated due to the Covid pandemic. Out of 208 applicants for the Geer funding, 31 were selected for funding including this project that HFRJ designed. HFRJ's grant proposal for this project was "among the top 1% of all applications submitted statewide" (June 30, 2021, GEER Project Team).

The second year was funded with a legislative appropriation sent to McKinley Community School for Adults, but to date those funds have not been disbursed. The principal of McKinley Community School for Adults said in a January 20, 2023 email: "I am hopeful that future allocations from the Legislature can bypass us and be sent directly to Windward Community College to minimize involvement of so many of us" (email from Helen Sanpei to Ardis Eschenberg, w/cc. to Lorenn Walker, et al).

HFRJ has continued the education project through a donation while awaiting release of the appropriated funds. The funds go to pay the peer tutors, provide a stipend for women who pass the GED, supervisor instructors who support the tutors and GED students, books, computers, software, other educational materials for the incarcerated women, college correspondence courses, college work study positions and support for individual women transitioning out of prison and reentering the community into college.

Program results to date

The program's remarkable results include 20 women passing the GED within 10 months of its application while the prison averaged only two women a year passing previously. More women are actively studying for the GED at WCCC than all the other prisons in the state combined. Since October 2021, about 100 imprisoned women have participated in the program. Forty women were trained to be peer tutors. Currently, there are 18 women being tested for the GED that is administered in four parts. To pass, four women currently need to take one more part of the test; two need two more tests; five need three more tests; and the remainder will be tested soon for their first part of the test. The GED test is highly proctored with valid results. Since the program began and to date there have been inordinate delays in GED testing. The program was not available for well over 6 months out of the 16 months since the first cohort of tutors were trained. Almost all the tutors released from WCCC are in college today with four enrolled at WCC (3 full-time and 1 part-time).

Rationale for Higher & Remedial Education Program at WCCC

Incarcerated people in Hawai'i suffer from significant educational deficits. According to the state, the average incarcerated person reads at the 5th-6th grade level, but women read at far lower levels, and are especially deficient in mathematics. About 60% of WCCC residents are high school dropouts. Serious systemic problems, often beginning with children who have learning difficulties,

are in special education and lack positive school and social influences, have contributed to zero tolerance strategies for student discipline, and resulted in the school to prison pipeline.

Research shows that higher education prevents repeat crime.¹ HFRJ knows this is true from its firsthand experiences including working with women formerly incarcerated at WCCC who have gone on to complete graduate school.

Higher education empowers women, and empowered women are more successful staying out of abusive relationships. “There is an inverse relationship between education and domestic violence. Lower education levels correlate with more likely domestic violence” (Huecker & Smock, 2019).² Domestic and intimate violence against women (DV used for both here) harm many all over the world including Hawai‘i. While DV has been a consistent problem for ages, research shows it is increasing nationally.³ In 2017 six women in Hawai‘i were murdered in DV cases and in 2019 there were three reported murder suicides in our state. HFRJ’s work confirms the research that most imprisoned women have been affected by DV.

Higher & continuing education program four-part plan:

1. Train and hire imprisoned peer educator tutors & supply educational materials

Imprisoned women who apply and are vetted by WCCC, are trained as tutors to teach their less educated peer studying for the GED. The cooperative learning methodology including the Jigsaw method, is used to train the tutors who can use it with the women they tutor and with the next cohort of tutors. Because of the transitory nature of prison with women coming in and out, four cohorts (40 women total) have been trained to date. The last three all by other tutors (while HFRJ stands by providing any support that may be needed). According to the state, the average incarcerated person in Hawai‘i has only a 5-6th grade education. Less educated women need specialized help in learning the skills necessary to pass the GED and take higher education courses. Tutors can help the less educated women learn skills to help them pass GED courses. Tutors can also help peers take and pass community college level courses and advance in primary grades before studying for the GED. The women being tutored learn and the women tutoring also learn, and everyone has the opportunity to appreciate and value social relationships and service for others, which is vital for living a meaningful and satisfied life.⁴ Albert Bandura, the fourth most quoted psychologist in the world, and whose work in agency

¹ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23282764.pdf?seq=1>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK499891/>

³ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/domestic-violence-murders-rising_n_5cae0d92e4b03ab9f24f2e6d?0kk
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/12/us/domestic-violence-victims.html>

⁴ <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Good-Life/Robert-Waldinger/9781982166694>

and self-efficacy is seminal,⁵ was aware of HFRJ's work and stated that he was "impressed" with HFRJ's approach.⁶ The tutors average about four hours work a week tutoring and are paid the highest compensation amount that we were allowed to give them (\$3.00 per hour).

Certification of Tutors: HFRJ collaborates with Windward Community College (WCC), which has reviewed and approves of HFRJ's tutor training curriculum. The curriculum is 20 hours total with 16 hours in class training using cooperative learning methodology plus 4 hours actual observed and evaluated tutoring.

HFRJ provides instructors who go to WCCC at different times to support the peer tutors, which I oversee. In addition to providing the peer tutoring component for this part of the project, HFRJ also supplies educational materials for the women including computers, recharging stations for the computers, software, classroom furniture, GED and other study books, GED testing vouchers as needed (the state's vouchers are often unworkable due to being previously used by another prison or they take too long to be delivered to the prison), paper, journals, pencils, calculators, tablets, etc.

2. Keeping Windward Community College at WCCC

WCC had a grant for six years to provide college programs for women in WCCC. WCC provides college preparatory courses, and two or three college classes at the prison each semester. The classes are for first- or second-year college students. This project includes continued collaboration with WCC's college program and keeping it at WCCC providing classes. This collaboration resulted in WCC becoming certified as a correspondence course provider. A main service WCC's program also provides is a full-time college counselor for the women to help them continue college when they are released from prison. Almost half of last year's funding from the legislature for this project was budgeted for the counselor's position. This project also funds work study positions at WCC for women who were imprisoned at WCCC. The project seeks to make transition from WCC into college outside of prison as seamless as possible and help all the women in or out of prison earn college degrees.

3. College correspondence courses

This pilot provides correspondence courses purchased from Adams State University in Colorado which has a special program for the incarcerated.⁷ Correspondence courses assist women who exhaust the WCC courses provided in prison and those who cannot take in-person courses in prison. Imprisoned people in Hawai'i are not permitted to take online college courses

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Bandura

⁶ <https://www.uscourts.gov/federal-probation-journal/2020/06/hawaii-federal-court-restorative-reentry-circle-pilot-project>

⁷ <https://www.adams.edu/academics/print-based/>

(during the pandemic online courses were offered for classes, but not for individuals). Additionally, we are working with UH, which we affiliated with in 2019, to explore the possibility of developing correspondence courses for imprisoned women. Twenty courses have been purchased to date for the women.

4. Support to transition to college and reentry into the community

The pilot is assisting imprisoned women transition into college after release back in the community. HFRJ supports work study positions at WCC for the women and helps them find other resources they may need, e.g., obtaining a laptop, recommendation letters for scholarships, jobs, etc.

In summary, this 4-part pilot project successfully provides cooperative learning experiences for women who have struggled with learning in the past and encourages them to pursue college and earn college degrees. To achieve this outcome the project trains women to be tutors who assist their peers earn GEDs; it provides college correspondence courses; maintains WCC's college counselor at WCCC; supports work study positions at WCC; and provides reentry assistance for the women to continue their educations after release. This is a pilot project aimed to show there are effective ways to engage women in effective educational activities that can increase law abiding behavior and create more peace in our community.

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

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS**

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

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 15, 2023

3:00 PM

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference State Capitol

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB710 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN

The Women's Prison Project (WPP) strongly supports this measure appropriating \$225,000 for the third year of the higher and continuing education pilot program at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). 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.

The program is a collaborative effort of WCCC, Windward Community College (WCC), Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice, and the College of Social Sciences University of Hawai'i. It was recently described in a peer reviewed article, while another paper on its theory and outcomes is being submitted to another academic publication. The program's remarkable results include 20 women passing the GED within 10 months of its inception, while the prison averaged only two women a year passing previously.

There was confusing testimony by the Department of Public Safety at a previous House hearing that equated this multifaceted and effective program with the state's GED testing program. The state is still responsible for GED testing at WCCC. The partners in the collaborative program have no desire to do the testing. There is no issue of duplication.

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. This is what rehabilitation looks like.

Research has shown that engagement in education while incarcerated and after release from prison significantly reduces recidivism. Education is the proven pathway to better employment opportunities, financial stability and increased ability to problem solve and think critically.

Incarcerated people in Hawai'i have significant educational deficits. By the state's own reporting, the average incarcerated person reads at the 5th-6th 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". 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. Most of the program's peer tutors have entered college upon release from prison or are working toward that goal.

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

If you have any questions about WPP's support of the program please contact Loren Walker, JD, MPH, at lorenn@hawaii.edu or (808) 218-3712.

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

Linda Rich
On behalf of the Women's Prison Project

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 3:54:20 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ann Botticelli | Testifying for Women's Prison Project | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Wakai and Kim, Vice Chairs Elefante and Kidani and members of the Senate Committees on Public Safety and Intergovernmental Affairs and Higher Education,

I am writing to you as a member of the Women's Prison Project.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 710, which will appropriate funds to help incarcerated women receive the training and educational support they need to thrive once they have completed their terms. As noted in the language of the measure, the first two years of this program have seen demonstrated increases in the number of women obtaining their GEDs. I am very happy that you are open to continuing this valuable program and I urge your support.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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

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



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, MILITARY AFFAIRS

Sen. Glenn Wakai, Chair

Sen. Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, Chair

Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 15, 2023

Room 225

3:00 PM

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB 710 - FUNDING EDUCATION & REENTRY AT WCCC

Aloha Chairs Wakai & Kin, Vice Chairs Elefante & Kidani and Members of the Committees!

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 4,043 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 918 of Hawai'i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad -- thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates the opportunity to share our thoughts and experiences in strong support of SB 710 that appropriates funds for the education and reentry program for women at WCCC and authorizes UH Windward Community College to award grants.

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

Poverty is one of the drivers of mass incarceration and education is the route out of poverty and onto economic mobility track.

¹ Department of Public Safety, Weekly Population Report, February 6, 2023.

https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2023-02-06_George-King.pdf

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 them and this peer tutoring program has helped them realize their own potential.

Community Alliance on Prisons urges the committee to pass SB 710 onto WAM with a strong recommendation that the program be sufficiently funded. This program is the route out of poverty for women and enables them and their families to dream.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:49:34 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Malina Kaulukukui | Testifying for Women's Prison Project | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT OF SB710

My name is Malina Kaulukukui, and I am a member of the Women's Prison Project. I am also a volunteer at the Women's Community Corrections Center (WCCC). I have seen first-hand the benefits of this innovative educational program that greatly expands the whole notion of GED preparation and testing, and expands the number of talented and bright incarcerated women involved in the educational process. This program trains incarcerated women to act as tutors, who then teach a contemporary, interactive GED curriculum to interested women. These tutors gain a remarkable opportunity to learn to teach. The GED students are learning their academic requirements from their trained peers who are using a more interactive methodology. This is NOT the GED curriculum of the past! What I know from being inside the women's prison is that typically, only a handful of women graduate with their GED each year. However, during this program's first year, the program graduated more than three times previous GED numbers. I also know that one of the program's first tutors is now in the community, a community college student, and has been hired as a tutor in a supportive education program. This bill is exactly the kind of programming that underscores correctional recommendations from the 2018 legislatively-mandated HCR 85 Task Force Report to create better outcomes and safe communities. It also supports the information shared by Ms. Amber Witchery, of the National Conference of State Legislatures, who challenged your colleagues in the House to develop state-wide creative, rehabilitative system changes for justice-involved persons. Thank you.



The Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and International Affairs
&
The Committee on Higher Education
February 15, 2023
Room 225, 3:00PM

RE: **SB 710, Relating to Incarcerated Women**

Attention: Chairs Glenn Wakai and Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chairs Brandon Elefante and Michelle Kidani, and Members of the Committees

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) appreciates the opportunity to testify **supporting the intent of SB 710**, Relating to Incarcerated Women.

SB 710 appropriates funding for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women, expended by the University of Hawai'i Windward Community College. The education and reentry program has been successful with assisting incarcerated women achieve their education goals and has increased passage rates for the general educational development (GED) test. Research has shown that the incorporation of education programs, and expanding opportunities for occupational training and job skill development, contributes to the decrease of recidivism. By creating an education and reentry program focused on training incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for their peers, providing college correspondence courses, and providing reentry and transition services to continue their education will decrease recidivism and increase the likelihood of gainful employment after release.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:31:29 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Meleanna Meyer | Testifying for WPP | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou e nā kau kānāwai;

Greetings legislators;

RE: SUPPORT of SB710

As your constituent as concerned member of the community, I ask for you members doing the work of the people, to support passage of SB710. as it relates to a hui of concerned folks interested in remedies to the incarceration of women in the penal system. Education and reentry programs demonstrate solid evidence that they work and are beneficial to all involved-- particularly to families of the incarcerated.

This bill will train and educate incarcerated women to develop tutors for peers, re-entry and transition services through community colleges etc. (Windward Community) to ensure that ongoing kokua be offered by not only Hawai'i Friends of Restorative justice, but the many others committed to improving the lives of all those incarcerated.

AS an educator and artist who has spent many years in various capacities-- to kokua not only the women, but juveniles through various programs-- (ALULIKE, KOKA etc.) I've seen first hand, the positive effects of this kind of positive attention to our incarcerated women and their families. Passage of this bill is essential for our ongoing work! Mahalo in advance.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Ms. Meleanna Aluli Meyer - Artist, Educator and member of the WPP hui

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 4:17:23 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This program has demonstrated its worth by increasing the number of incarcerated women who have obtained their GED--the first step in returning them to a life as a productive citizen.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 4:44:49 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

As an educator and a member of the Women's Prison Project, I strongly support this bill for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women. This bill can changes the lives of these women, plus the lives of their children. Education is the key to breaking the cycle of women returning to prison - this effort gives them hope for their future. Mahalo for supporting this bill.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 2:06:29 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| cheryl B. | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I SUPPORT this bill which appropriates moneys to the University of Hawaii Windward Community College for the education and reentry program for incarcerated women developed and administered by Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice. Authorizes the University of Hawaii Windward Community College to award grants to a private entity.

It is an extremely valuable program and impacts our community positively.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 12:32:53 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Tadia Rice | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs, and Higher Education Committee Chair Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair Brandon J.C. Elefante, Members Carol Fukunaga, Angus LK. McKelvey, and Brenton Awa; and Higher Education Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani, and

Members Carol Fukunaga, Angus LK. McKelvey, Brenton Awa; Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, and Kurt Fevella:

SB 710 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN is such an important effort to help the women of Hawai'i who find themselves serving time in our State prison system. Education is a singular key to helping these intelligent individuals become more well informed, and achieve success as they heal from trauma that helped take them into the prison system. Having certificates and credentials earned in prison provides them with job opportunities when they get out. This is critical to keeping them out and maintaining a productive life as they provide for themselves and their families. Providing money to the University of Hawaii Windward Community College for educational reentry programs for incarcerated women helps develops their capacities and improves good citizenship. The Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice has done remarkable work and deserves the support this Bill can provide by authorizing the University of Hawaii Windward Community College to award grants to a private entity such as theirs. As a member of the Women's Prison Project, and as a State volunteer for 10 years at the Women's Community Corrections Center where I taught skillsets, I have seen the power of these educational programs. What is needed are life-changing and enlightening programs for incarcerated women, most who come from marginalized communities. Please support SB 710. Mahalo!

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 2:25:10 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Lindsay Ann Pacheco | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Wakai, Mercado-Kim & Vice Chairs Elefante, Kidani:

My name is Lindsay Ann Pacheco and I am not only a formerly homeless woman with nearly 9 years of homelessness experience, but I am an ex-felon who has spent a great deal of time in the Women's Community Correctional Center at one point, a long time ago in my life.

I am writing in support of SB710 as from my understanding this Bill will help to continue allowing women who are currently incarcerated in the Women's Community Correctional Center a chance to earn a higher education while incarcerated.

Although I have personally been "maxed" out of the justice system for 16 years, the time I did spend in WCCC was spent trying to help better myself as an individual through education. I strongly believe that most of us who do find ourselves incarcerated for great lengths of time can allow ourselves a chance to not only change our behaviors but also better ourselves as overall human beings through education.

As I have mentioned above, I also have nearly 9 years of homelessness experience, and yes, this is recent experience. I have been housed now for nearly 3 years, and part of the reason I am successfully remaining housed and out of trouble is because I have once again picked up where I left off with my college journey which originally began while I was incarcerated. Although it took me several years to start college again after my final release from prison, and although it took me a while to get back on track with college also after being homeless for a good number of years, I did graduate last year in May of 2022 with my Associates Degree in Liberal Arts. Not to mention, I am still a current full time college student at UH Manoa now pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work.

Through these personal experiences of mine I have become a strong believer that other folks, like myself, who have experienced incarceration, we have far better chances at bettering ourselves and our future lives out in society through educational opportunities such as what this measure is proposing.

I strongly support SB710. Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony.

Lindsay Ann Pacheco

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 2:26:32 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support SB710.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 11:26:22 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please pass this win-win bill!

- This bill is the companion to HB 1129 heard last week where it PASSED in CMV.
- This is a great program to develop PEER TUTORS to assist other women living at WCCC in obtaining their GED.
- Education is the key for these women. We want productive citizens, not continuing prisoners.
- The program, before this much better program, graduated 2 students in 6 months; this program graduated 20 women in 6 months!
- The best part is that women who never thought they would go to college are taking college courses while at WCCC and many will continue pursuing their college degrees upon release.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:16:41 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Windward Community College (WCC) has initiated a program having an incredibly meaningful impact on the lives of Hawaii's women inmates. The program reaches individuals at a critical turning point in their lives and is having transformative impact on these women. I had the opportunity to hear one of these women speak about the enormous impact the education she received from this program had on her life. It was so inspiring. I strongly urge your support of SB710 in order that this groundbreaking and innovative initiative can continue to impactfully change lives.

Thank you for your consideration of my STRONG support for SB710.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:01:35 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

My name is Carla Allison and I strongly support SB710. This bill funds education for incarcerated women, exactly the resource needed to prevent recidivism and change the future of our local women and their families. Please vote yes on this bill so the already successful programs can continue. Thank you.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 12:02:34 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill and intent

Aloha my name is Shyrae Na'ihe. I'm giving my testimony because I have been incarcerated at the Women's Community Corrections Center (WCCC). I am currently in the work furlough program. However, I am using this time to attend Windward Community College (WCC). I was allowed to do this because WCC offers a work studies program. Which allows me to do part-time school and part-time work. Therefore, my program (work furlough) allowed me to attend college. I am currently working towards my AA in liberal arts and majoring in Sustainable Agriculture.

Two years ago, when I was first incarcerated I wasn't thinking about going back to school for college. With the help of the friends of restorative justice the women's prison offers college courses. I enrolled into the Pu'uhonua Program and started taking classes. I realized that furthering my education would reduce my recidivism. I could use my incarceration time wisely and actually make something of myself. I wanted to change my life around and furthering education was my ticket to do that. Not long after I started taking college classes I became a Tutor in the first cohort with Larenn Walker and the Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice (HFRJ). I was helping other women in prison to get their GED. Being a tutor made me feel like I was doing something good. Seeing the women accomplish their GED and have a graduation was so inspiring. I was setting a good example by showing them that they can also go on to college. I encouraged them to keep striving to learn and grow and in return, it encouraged me to keep striving as well. Being a peer mentor tutoring other women gave me more confidence in myself. I gained different skills in communication by working with women who had different learning styles. I strengthened my cooperative learning skills by learning, teaching and performing jig-saw exercises. I was not equipped with knowledge in all four GED subjects. However, I started to learn and grow with the women I was helping and We learned together. I also improved my speaking skills because I spoke about different materials in multiple group settings. I am a better person today because of my experience being a tutor.

The friends of HFRJ believe in education, giving us incarcerated women a chance at bettering our lives. I have reduced my recidivism rate by pursuing my education, and I believe in myself today. I am very grateful to our friends at HFRJ for being a part of my journey.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

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

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 3:00 pm
Via videoconference, Conference Room
State Capitol

STRONG SUPPORT SB710 RELATING TO INCARCERATED WOMEN.

Dear Senators Wakai and Kim:

As a member of the clergy, and the Women's Prison Project, I am writing in strong support of SB 710, which would secure \$250,000 for the program to train incarcerated women to be general education development tutors for their peers and provide college correspondence courses for women in the women's community correctional center and provide reentry and transition services.

Women helping women, especially when they are still incarcerated, can be an incredible lesson in and of itself. It will build community and interpersonal relationships among women who may not feel they have too much to offer another human being. Teaching another person is a way of building confidence in their own abilities, and shows the women being taught what is possible for them, too.

Please take note: in just ten months, the program assisted **20 women** who were incarcerated at the women's community correctional center in obtaining general educational development certifications. (**Prior to the program, only 2** women per year passed the exam.)

Obviously, this program makes a real difference. I respectfully request that you pass SB 710, and secure the funding and continue this incredible program to educate and prepare women coming out incarceration with a chance at building a secure future for themselves and their families.

Sincerely,
The Rev. Jeannie D. Thompson
Pastor, Nu'uaniu Congregational Church
(808) 353-1387

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 5:42:59 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Strong support of SB710.

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:04:42 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| karolle t. bidgood | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this bill which will provide "workforce readiness skills" for women incarcerated at WCCC. I urge your committee to do the same.

Thank you.

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

STRONG SUPPORT OF SB710

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I didn't want to go back to my old life style and I found a way that I didn't have too. EDUCATION. Being a part of this program didn't just help me with my GED, I had a job, it helped me set goals, rebuild my relationship with my 'Ohana through Huikahi Circles, obtain 6 college credits before leaving the facility, getting 2 different certifications, helped me earn money while inside, helped me set a foundation, helped with reintegrating 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 SB710 out of this committee.

Forever grateful,

Simone' Nanilei' Kamaunu



Adult Friends for Youth

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE
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Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun, M.S.W.

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**Past Chair of the Board*

Testimony on SB710 Relating to Incarcerated Women and SB712 Relating to Corrections

Submitted to: Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Brandon JC Elefante, Vice Chair

Committee on Higher Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N Kidani, Vice Chair

Submitted by: Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun, M.S.W.
President and CEO of Adult Friends for Youth

Chairs Wakai and Mercado Kim, Vice Chairs Elefante and Kidani, Members of the Committees:

I support SB710 Relating to Incarcerated Women and SB712 Relating to Corrections

My name is Debbie Spencer-Chun, President and CEO of Adult Friends for Youth (AFY).

I am also a member of the Women Prison Project that has worked tirelessly to improve the welfare of women who are incarcerated. My reason for joining this group was simple - many of our youth that we service have incarcerated parents. We need to stop the cycle of incarceration from all angles so we will have healthier, thriving families, as well as communities. AFY believes in the power of education to help redirect the lives of our young people from destructive to constructive behaviors. We also believe that if we have educated and healthier moms – we will have educated and healthier children.

These bills will:

- Provide an opportunity for these women to obtain their GED which is just a stepping stone to achieving many other goals and allowing them to regain the confidence they need to successfully reintegrate into the community.
- Provide an opportunity for the staff to gain a better understanding as to the reasons behind these women's pre-incarcerated behaviors which will hopefully allow the staff to support them on their journey of healing. It will also help bring self-awareness for the staff to identify any trauma they may have and help them to also heal in order to be more effective service providers.

For these reasons I support Bills.... and humbly ask for your support too.

Mahalo

Debbie Spencer-Chun

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/15/2023 7:51:54 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| diane chen Koch-weser | Testifying for Women's Prison Project | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I would like to submit my testimony in support of measures SB710/ SB711 and SB712. I am a physician and a member of the Women's Prison Project. I have long been an advocate of women's rights and women's independence from traditional societal norms. The key to empowerment of women is educational opportunity in a safe environment and equal opportunities as those afforded to men. These three bills are particularly important steps in helping a special population of women, those who are incarcerated to achieve their independence and live productive stable lives, Their very presence in prison is often the result of a lack of education, a fair chance to succeed and/or a toxic unsafe living environment.

Please support these bills and help give these women the opportunity to prove to themselves and to the world that they can re-enter society with new skills and achieve their goals.

Diane Chen Koch- Weser, M.D.,MPH

SB-710

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:05:07 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/15/2023 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of SB710 which provides funding for an education and reentry program for incarcerated women through Windward Community College. This pilot education and reentry program, developed and administered by the Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice, has been extraordinarily successful in producing an unprecedented number of GED graduates in its first year of operation. This has been a dramatic ten-fold increase from previous years.

The HRFJ program is very different from the PSD Dept. of Education GED program. This 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 able to take college courses, both within the women’s correctional facility as well as at WCC upon their release.

The program also assists women leaving prison by funding an educational counsellor position who helps women transition to Windward Community College. Other activities include providing such things as correspondence courses and reentry planning to help make the transition out of prison easier.

Funds for the second year’s operation of this program were allocated by the Hawaii legislature in 2021, but have thus far not been released by the principal of McKinley High School. Meanwhile, this invaluable, life-changing program has been forced to hobble along, saved only by the donation of a generous benefactor. The program may soon be forced to curtail some of its activities if the funds are not released in a timely manner.

To avoid this problem in the future, please pass SB710 and bypass any bureaucratic roadblocks that would derail this important and cost-effective program.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Diana Bethel