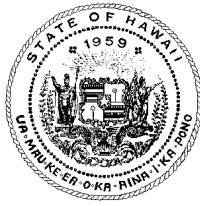


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalua Kalaima
a Ho'oponopono Ola*
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Vacant
Deputy Director
Correctional Institutions

Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 160 /
HOUSE RESOLUTION 139

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

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

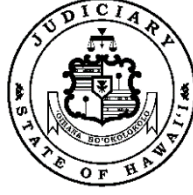
Wednesday, March 20, 2024; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & via Videoconference

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

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) supports House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 160 / House Resolution (HR) 139, 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 / HR 139.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2024 Regular Session

House Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans

Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair

Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & 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.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

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

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

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & 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.

HCR-160

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 1:06:40 PM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tadia Rice	Tahirih Association BEYOND BARS Reentry Program	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Many States have enacted criminal justice reforms in recent years to reduce prison populations without harming public safety. These reforms target the main drivers of high incarceration rates: the number of people admitted (or re-admitted) into correctional facilities and the length of their prison stays. HCR 160/HR139 can make an impact to achieve this reduction by implementing a Commission that will develop a strategy and make recommendations to reduce the number of women incarcerated at the Womens Community Correctional Center by 25% over the next five years.

Please support HCR 160/HR139.

HCR-160

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 7:41:41 AM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Botticelli	Womens Prison Project	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun and members of the Committee on Corrections, Military & Veterans,

My name is Ann Botticelli and I am a member of the Womens Prison Project, which is dedicated to transforming the way we handle the incarceration of women. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of HCR 160. The most current data on hand shows that 60 percent of incarcerated women in Hawai'i have been sexually victimized, and 80 percent have experienced violence. It is appropriate for Hawai'i to move away from imprisonment and toward a more compassionate response to women who commit crimes. Establishing a timeline for reducing the number of incarcerated women is a good start.

Mahalo,

Ann Botticelli

Member, Womens Prison Project

COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, & VETERANS

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, March 20, 2024

TIME: 10:00 AM

PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 430

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

RE: HCR 160 / HR 139 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 Hashem and Committee Members,

I am writing as a founding member of the Women's Prison Project in **strong support of HCR 160 / HR 139** 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 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 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 / HR 139 seeks to address both deficiencies by calling on 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.

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 this resolution.

I appreciate the chance to share my thoughts with you on this important matter, and request your enthusiastic support for HCR 160 / HR 139.

Linda Lingle
Women's Prison Project

HCR-160

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 10:05:01 PM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Tom	Women's Prison Project	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem and Committee Members,

I am writing as a founding member of the Women's Prison Project in strong support of HCR 160/HR 139. This will reduce the number of women at the Women's Community Correction Center (WCCC) by approximately 25% by 2029.

There will be more detailed testimony in person why this legislation is so important. I thank you for the opportunity to submit my written testimony of support and hope that you will also enthusiastically support this resolution.

Sincerely,

Laurie K.S. Tom, M.D.

Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism

HCR-160

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 10:30:14 PM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meleanna Meyer	Women's Prison Project	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Chair Hashem and Committee members;

I'm in full support of the WPP project to request that the Women's corrections and implementation Commission develop strategies to reduce the number of women incarcerated at the Women's Correctional Center, by 25% or more, over the next five years... and that funding for these WPP get the needed support by your committee, as we represent many of your constituents in the community, calling for progressive care that is rehabilitative and regenerative. Thank you for your time and focused attention to this important issue for women incarcerated.

Sincerely,

Meleanna Aluli Meyer, Member of the WPP

COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, & VETERANS

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, March 20, 2024

TIME: 10:00 AM

PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 430

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 Hashem 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



Submission of Testimony re: HCR160 17 May 2024: Requesting the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission develop a strategy, make recommendations to reduce the number of incarcerated women at WCCC by 25% over next 5 years.

To the State of Hawaii House of Representatives:

Thank you in advance for your time. I strongly support HCR160 particularly after having experienced over time the filming, observing, and working with three wardens, staff, and the women who reside at Hawaii's Womens Community Correctional Center.

Critics no longer debate whether our current system of crime and punishment has been historically oppressive to women of all races, but especially to those from indigenous cultures and women who experienced childhoods of poverty that affect 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 rates for women in U.S. prisons, escalates. Why?

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 seems to be unique among other prisons across the country. 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. Change is possible. He attributes the zero population of female youth (first in the U,S,) to the implementation of "trauma informed care" approaches and credit to ideas that came from WCCC's prison staff. With the vast experience of current Warden Noni Guillonta and with your support, Hawaii can create 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.

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, business, and Western governance with its new laws and culture, the native people were disproportionately caught in the criminal justice system and this statistic is



unchanged when looking at the greatest number of females we imprison and confine today. Worse, is that the majority of their crimes are non-violent crimes perpetrated mostly by women who are mothers and grandmothers, women who have suffered abusive relationships, many who are victims of sexual abuse during their childhoods and reached puberty without any medical treatment, many of whom eventually turned to alcohol and drugs to self medicate — and hence find themselves behind bars. 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 their children, we invest in their educations, their intellectual and emotional growth as contributing community members, 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

17 May 2024

HCR-160

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 7:38:55 PM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Margaret Sneed	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am Margot Sneed and I would like to request that the bill requesting the WCC develop a strategy to reduce the number of women incarcerated by 25% over the next 5 years be approved. There is so much we can do to reduce the number of incarcerated women by offering them an understanding of the historical trauma and other issues that brought them to incarceration, opportunities to learn basic skills to gain employment, education and housing. Addressing their victimization that leads to homelessness, substance abuse and other crimes to survive. I have worked with many women at MCCC that were considered hopeless addicts and through programs such as the BEST Reintegration Program, they were given hope, empowerment and many are successful working women now with Bachelor's and Master's degrees. They are social workers, managers, college employees and so much more. We need to look at the root of the problem and grow those branches so they can reach out with new skills and resources to be successful and close that revolving door of incarceration.

Mahalo, Margot Sneed

HCR-160

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:37:18 AM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Rich	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, & VETERANS

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

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 10:00am

Conference Room 430 State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

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

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 / HR 139 / 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 the needs of female inmates are markedly different than those of their male counterparts and 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 as 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 HCR 160 / HR 139 / and endorse the goal of reducing the number of women incarcerated at WCCC by 25% within 5 years with WCIC charged with developing the strategies to make it happen,

Thank you,

Linda L. Rich