



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NŌ
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February 7, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President and Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker and Members of the
House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

In accordance with Chapter 353L-6, I am submitting the monthly Oversight Coordinator Report for the month of January. This report includes actions taken by the Commission and expenses for the preceding month. This report may be reviewed electronically at <http://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/reports>.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at 808-900-2200.

Respectfully,

Christin Johnson
Oversight Coordinator

Enclosure

c: Governor's Office
Legislative Reference Bureau Library (1 hard copy)



Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

Monthly Oversight Coordinator Report – January 2025

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Introduction

In accordance with Chapter §353L-6, the Oversight Coordinator shall submit a monthly report to the Commission, the Governor, and the Legislature. The monthly report shall include actions taken by the Commission and expenses for the preceding month. In addition to the mandated parties this report must be shared with, the Oversight Coordinator publicly posts the monthly report to increase transparency and accountability. This report will also be shared with each individual who has the responsibility of appointing members of the Commission. This includes:

- 1) Governor of Hawaii
- 2) President of the Hawaii Senate
- 3) Speaker of the Hawaii House of Representatives
- 4) Hawaii Supreme Court Chief Justice
- 5) Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

The Oversight Coordinator monthly reports are released on the first Thursday of each month, covering the previous month, and will be discussed on the second Thursday of each month at the monthly Commission meetings.

Death in Custody

On February 5, 2025, around 1:00am at the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC), a corrections officer responded to commotion coming from a cell, immediately gave direct orders for two cellmates to get away from each other, and then immediately called for backup. Backup arrived, the cellmates were removed, and staff began administering CPR on a 33-year-old male. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel arrived at the facility and assumed CPR and life-saving measures. Around 1:50am, the individual in custody was pronounced deceased. This death appears to be a homicide.

Published Reports

2024 Annual Report

In accordance with 353L-6, the Commission shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature no less than twenty days before the convening of each regular session. The Commission's 2024 Annual Report includes a full and complete statement of actions taken by the Commission for the preceding year and recommendations, including proposed legislation, that the Commission deems necessary or desirable.

In summary, the Commission undertook significant initiatives, holding 19 public meetings and issuing 20 detailed reports that addressed critical facility conditions, systemic challenges, and policy recommendations. The Commission's collaborative efforts with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation resulted in over 60 recommendations aimed at improving facility safety, enhancing rehabilitative opportunities, and promoting successful reentry into society. Additionally, the Commission conducted 33 general facility visits and six special tours, offering firsthand insights into the state of our correctional institutions. These visits underscored the urgent need for infrastructure upgrades, expanded rehabilitative programming, and compassionate care for individuals in custody.

House Concurrent Resolution 23 Task Force Report

During the 2023 Legislative Session, House Concurrent Resolution No. 23 was passed requesting the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission to convene a task force to examine and make recommendations regarding existing procedures of the Hawai'i Paroling Authority setting the minimum terms of imprisonment. The resolution aimed to explore parole models from other states and determine whether minimum sentencing responsibilities should be removed from the Paroling Authority. The task force included representatives from various sectors, including the judiciary, executive branch, legislature, and victims' advocates. Ultimately, the group did not collectively agree on legislation or recommendations for the legislature. The report was released on January 21, 2025, with all the information collected from the meetings.

The report can be found at: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/systemic-reports/>

Correctional Staff Survey, Findings, and Recommendations Report

On January 22, 2025, the Commission released its report on the correctional staff survey, findings, and recommendations. The Commission deliberately undertook this staffing survey and report as the Commission's first system-wide report due to the concerning conditions that staff are expected to work in. For years, the Commission has heard devastating stories from uniform and civilian correctional staff regarding their working conditions whether it be in person during facility tours, or through correctional staff contacting the Commission directly. Corrections staff are desperate to be heard and for meaningful change to occur. This report was intentionally prioritized by the Commission to address the critical issues outlined by staff.

The report can be found at: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/systemic-reports/>

Communications from Commissions

Letter to Governor: Urgent Call for a System Wide Plan Before Proceeding with New Jail Construction

On January 3, 2025, the Commission sent a letter to Governor Green and the Hawaii State Legislature, expressing conditional support for constructing a new jail to replace the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). The letter raises concerns that the DCR is focusing too narrowly on building the facility without addressing broader, systemic issues in Hawaii's correctional system, including inadequate rehabilitative programming, mental and physical healthcare, and reentry services. The letter highlights the need for evidence-based, culturally competent programs, trauma-informed design, and robust community-based alternatives to incarceration.

The letter can be read at: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/communications-news-releases/>.

Letter to Governor: Director of DCR Engagement and Participation with the Commission

On January 14, 2025, the Commission sent a letter to Governor Green requesting assistance in ensuring that Director Tommy Johnson of the DCR attends future Commission meetings, as his presence is essential for fostering collaboration and progress on reforms to Hawaii's

correctional system. The Commission highlights that past DCR administrations consistently attended meetings and stresses the importance of open communication, accurate information, and mutual engagement. It also raises concerns over recent comments by Director Johnson that questioned the Commission's expertise, calling for an end to divisive rhetoric and a focus on building trust and collaboration. The Commission seeks the Governor's support in encouraging the Director to actively engage and work collectively toward meaningful corrections reform.

The letter can be read at: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/communications-news-releases/>.

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs Informational Briefing

Presentation of 2024 Annual Report and Correctional Staff Survey, Findings and Recommendations Report

On January 22, 2025, the Oversight Coordinator and Chair presented its 2024 Annual Report and Correctional Staff Survey, Findings and Recommendations Report during a Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs (PSM) informational briefing. The briefing was meant to bring awareness to the work of the Commission, and the important findings and recommendations outlined in the correctional staff report. The Commission thanks Chair Brandon Elefante and Vice Chair Glenn Wakai for the invitation to present to the committee.

Commission Meeting on Legislative Priorities

The Commission had an additional meeting (outside of the regular monthly meetings) on January 30, 2025, to finalize a list of legislative measures that Commissioners will testify on. Below is the list of bills the Commission chose to support. The Commission did not choose any bills to actively not support.

A. Commission Related Bills

HB 1002 (SB 1321)

Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission; Oversight Coordinator

RELATING TO THE HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION.

Beginning July 1, 2025, extends the term of the oversight coordinator for the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission. Clarifies that the oversight coordinator has the general authority to inspect agencies and correctional facilities without notice.

Introduced by: NAKAMURA (Introduced by request of another party)

B. Bail/Pre-Trial Detention

HB 127

Pretrial Release; Bail

RELATING TO PRETRIAL RELEASE.

Requires the court to enter on the record its written findings regarding the necessity of the conditions imposed on a defendant's release. Requires bail to be set in an amount that the defendant can afford based on certain factors.

Introduced by: TARNAS, BELATTI, GRANDINETTI, IWAMOTO, MARTEN, PERRUSO, POEPOE, SOUZA, TAKAYAMA

SB 725 (HB 675)

Judges; Bail; Findings

RELATING TO BAIL.

Requires judges to make certain findings regarding a defendant's ability to afford bail.

Introduced by: RHOADS, CHANG, SAN BUENAVENTURA

C. New Jail/New Construction

HB 1263 – SUBMIT COMMENTS

Correctional Facilities; Moratorium; Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission; Criminal Justice

Diversion Task Force; Appropriation (\$)

RELATING TO CORRECTIONS.

Establishes a moratorium on the issuance of a request for proposal and construction of any new or expanded correctional facility from 7/1/2025 to 6/30/2028, including the planned construction of a new facility to replace the existing Oahu community correctional center. Establishes a criminal justice diversion task force.

Appropriates funds.

Introduced by: HUSSEY, GRANDINETTI, IWAMOTO, PERRUSO

D. Rehabilitative Practices

SB 782 (HB 676)

PUC; Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Communication Services; Correctional Facilities; Hawaii

Youth Correctional Facilities; Report; Appropriations (\$)

RELATING TO YOUTH AND ADULT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

Requires the State's youth and adult correctional facilities to provide free and accessible voice communication services for incarcerated persons in state correctional facilities. Prohibits any state agency from deriving revenue or financial benefit from the provision of communication services to persons confined in state correctional facilities. Requires the Public Utilities Commission to establish service quality standards and rules for the free voice communication services. Requires a report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

Introduced by: Rhodes

E. Reentry

HB 1342

Recidivism; Offender Re-entry Programs; Appropriation (\$)

RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAMS.

Expands programming and training for the comprehensive offender re-entry program under the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to reduce the rate of recidivism and increase inmate marketability and workforce readiness. Appropriates funds.

Introduced by: SHIMIZU, AMATO, BELATTI, GRANDINETTI, IWAMOTO, KUSCH, LA CHICA, MATAYOSHI, MATSUMOTO, OLDS, PIERICK, TAKAYAMA, WARD

HB 911

Recidivism; Offender Re-entry Programs; Appropriation (\$)

RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAMS.

Expands programming and training for the comprehensive offender reentry program under the department of corrections and rehabilitation to reduce the rate of recidivism and increase inmate marketability. Appropriates funds.

Introduced by: MATSUMOTO, GARCIA, IWAMOTO, KILA, MATAYOSHI, MIYAKE, OLDS, WARD, Alcos

HB 433

Reentry Services; Community-based Services; Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Appropriation (\$)

RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY.

Appropriates funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for reentry services to connect offenders with community-based services.

Introduced by: NAKAMURA, AMATO, BELATTI, CHUN, COCHRAN, EVSLIN, GARRETT, GRANDINETTI, HASHEM, HOLT, HUSSEY, ICHIIYAMA, ILAGAN, IWAMOTO, KAHALOA, KAPELA, KEOHOKAPU-LEE LOY, KILA, KITAGAWA, KONG, KUSCH, LA CHICA, LEE, M., LOWEN, MARTEN, MATAYOSHI, MIYAKE, MORIKAWA, OLDS, PERRUSO, POEPOE, QUINLAN, SAYAMA, TAKAYAMA, TAKENOUCI, TAM, TARNAS, TEMPLO, TODD, WOODSON, YAMASHITA, Lamosao

HB 481

DCR; Offender Reentry; Certification; Suitability for Employment (\$)

RELATING TO OFFENDER REENTRY.

Requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to issue a certificate of suitability for employment. Requires the Department to collaborate with state and federal agencies and private employers to educate stakeholders on the certification. Appropriate funds.

Introduced by: MURAOKA

HB 251 (SB 734)

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Department of Human Services; Social Work; Training Program; Nonviolent Incarcerated Individuals; Reports; Appropriation (\$)

RELATING TO SOCIAL WORK.

Requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, in collaboration with the Department of Human Services, to develop and establish a social work training program to assist nonviolent incarcerated individuals in the area of social work. Requires progress reports on the program to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

Introduced by: TAM, AMATO, GRANDINETTI, IWAMOTO, KILA, LA CHICA, LEE, M., MARTEN, MATAYOSHI, POEPOE, TAKAYAMA, TARNAS, TODD

SB 224 (HB 677)

DCR; Offender Reentry; Identification Documents; Departmental Assistance

RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION.

Requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, in collaboration with various agencies and upon request of the inmates, to assist inmates in obtaining the inmates' civil identification card, birth certificate, social security card, and other relevant identification necessary for successful reentry into society, as soon as practicable. Requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to initiate the process of obtaining identifying documents for inmates released to work furlough, extended furlough, or community placement programs, by providing the forms necessary for the inmate to obtain civil identification cards and other identifying documents to the inmate as soon as practicable.

Introduced by: ELEFANTE, AQUINO, CHANG, KANUHA, MCKELVEY, SAN BUENAVENTURA, WAKAI, Fukunaga, Hashimoto, Moriwaki

F. Medical

HB 854

Electronic Record Keeping; DC&R; Medical Records; Reporting; Appropriation (\$)

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES OF COMMITTED PERSONS.

Appropriates \$500,000, for each year of the fiscal biennium to the department of corrections and rehabilitation to procure a new software for electronic record keeping of medical records. Requires a report to the legislature. Introduced by: SHIMIZU, IWAMOTO, LA CHICA, MATSUMOTO, MURAOKA, PIERICK, WARD

G. Mental Health

SB 955 – SUBMIT COMMENTS

DOH; Judiciary; Penal Code; Fitness to Proceed; Escape From Custody

RELATING TO FITNESS TO PROCEED.

Clarifies the term of commitment for a defendant being held at a hospital or mental health facility for a fitness-to-proceed examination. Clarifies who may serve as a qualified examiner. Reduces from 3 to 2 the number of qualified examiners required for a fitness-to-proceed examination in a felony case, unless the examiners disagree on the defendant's fitness. Establishes the rate of compensation for conducting the examinations.

Establishes a reduced penalty, except in certain circumstances, for a person who commits the offense of escape in the second degree while in the custody of the Director of Health under section 704-421(1), Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Introduced by: SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHANG, MCKELVEY

SB 160 – SUBMIT COMMENTS

DOH; DCR; Inmates; Detainees; Mental Health Facility; Appropriation (\$)

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

Requires the Department of Health to construct a mental health facility for inmates or detainees with mental health needs in the custody of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Appropriates moneys.

Introduced by: CHANG, FEVELLA, LEE, Gabbard

HB 1197

DC&R; Clinical Psychologists; Student Education Partnerships (\$)
RELATING TO CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY.

Authorizes the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to utilize student education partnerships to increase the amount of mental health care providers in correctional facilities across the State. Appropriates funds.

H. Solitary Confinement

SB 104 (HB 1322)

DCR; Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission; Correctional Facilities; Committed Persons; Solitary Confinement; Restrictions; Report
RELATING TO CORRECTIONS.

Restricts the use of solitary confinement in state-operated and state-contracted correctional facilities, with certain specified exceptions. Requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to develop written policies and procedures regarding solitary confinement by 7/1/2026. Requires the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission to review certain housing placements. Requires the Department to develop policies and procedures to review committed persons placed in solitary confinement and develop a plan for committed persons currently in solitary confinement by 4/1/2026. Requires a report to the Legislature and Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission. Effective 7/1/2026.

Introduced by: ELEFANTE, CHANG, FEVELLA, FUKUNAGA, LEE, SAN BUENAVENTURA, Wakai

I. Correctional Staff

SB 474 – SUBMIT COMMENTS

DCR; Psychologists; Licensing
RELATING TO PSYCHOLOGISTS.

Requires clinical psychologists employed by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to obtain licensure within 10 years from the date of employment. Sunsets on 7/1/2035.

Introduced by: ELEFANTE, CHANG, FEVELLA, INOUE, KIDANI, Hashimoto, San Buenaventura

HB 69 (SB 90)

DCR; Compensatory Time Cash-Out Pilot Program; Appropriations (\$)
RELATING TO A COMPENSATORY TIME CASH-OUT PILOT PROGRAM.

Establishes a Compensatory Time Cash-Out Pilot Program for eligible employees of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation who work in any state correctional facility. Appropriates funds.

Introduced by: MATAYOSHI, CHUN, GARRETT, HOLT, KITAGAWA, MARTEN, OLDS, SAYAMA, TAKAYAMA, TAM

J. Juvenile Justice

SB 694

Minors; Detention; Adult Correctional Facilities; Prohibition
RELATING TO THE DETENTION OF MINORS.

Prohibits minors from being held in jails, lockups, or prisons for adults.

Introduced by: GABBARD, CHANG

K. Expungement

HB 132

AG; Expungement; Pilot Project; Promotion of a Drug in the Third Degree; Schedule V
Substances

RELATING TO EXPUNGEMENT.

Makes an amendment to the Department of the Attorney General pilot project for a state-initiated expungement process of arrest records concerning promoting a detrimental drug in the third degree to include the possession of any schedule V substance in any amount.

Introduced by: TARNAS, BELATTI, GRANDINETTI, IWAMOTO, KAPELA, KUSCH, LEE, MARTEN, PERRUSO, POEPOE, Matayoshi

Current Projects

Reentry Report

Consistent with the Commission's mandate to work with the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (DCR) in monitoring and reviewing the comprehensive offender reentry program, HCSOC staff are currently working on a reentry report in accordance with the reentry portion of the Commission's mandate:

- Work with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in monitoring and reviewing the Comprehensive Offender Reentry Program, including facility educational and treatment programs, rehabilitative services, work furloughs, and the Hawaii Paroling Authority's oversight of parolees. HRS §353L-3(b)(3)
- Ensure that the Comprehensive Offender Reentry System under Chapter 353H is working properly to provide programs and services that result in the timely release of people in custody on parole when the maximum terms have been served instead of delaying the release for lack of programs and services. HRS §353L-3(b)(4)

The Commission will compile the HCSOC's first reentry report, outlining findings, highlighting best practices, and offering recommendations. The report is due to be published in late February, 2025.

Expenses for the Preceding Month – December

	Cost	Qty	Total	Notes
Office Equipment and Supplies			\$845	
Office Furniture			\$0.00	
General Office Supplies	\$588.63	1.00	\$588.63	Computer Equipment
Staff and Commission Badges			\$0.00	
Staff and Commission Badge Holders			\$0.00	
Cell Phone			\$0.00	
Cell Phone Monthly Plan	\$172.99	1.00	\$172.99	
Wifi Hotspot			\$0.00	
Heroku Monthly Plan - Complaint Management	\$65.00	1.00	\$65.00	
Elastic Cloud Monthly Plan - Complaint Management	\$18.20	1.00	\$18.20	
Other Current Expenditures			\$0.00	
Inter-Island Correctional Facility Travel			\$341.18	
Airfare	\$137.18	1.00	\$137.18	
Car Rental	\$115.00	1.00	\$115.00	
Daily Per Diem	\$20.00	2.00	\$40.00	GC & RI
Lodging+Tax			\$0.00	
Ground Transportation			\$0.00	
Airport Parking	\$49.00	1.00	\$49.00	GC & RI
Per Diem - Misc			\$0.00	
Mainland Correctional Facility Travel			\$682.58	
Airfare	\$682.58	1.00	\$682.58	Conference Travel
Car Rental			\$0.00	
Daily Per Diem			\$0.00	
Lodging+Tax			\$0.00	
Ground Transportation			\$0.00	
Airport Parking			\$0.00	
Memberships + Conferences			\$600.00	
NACOLE (National Assoc. for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement)	\$600.00	1.00	\$600.00	
National Association of Sentencing Commissions			\$0.00	
NACOLE Virtual Training			\$0.00	
Going Home Hawaii Reentry Summit			\$0.00	
Hawaii Friends of Restorative Justice			\$0.00	
Airfare			\$0.00	
Car Rental			\$0.00	
Daily Per Diem			\$0.00	
Lodging+Tax			\$0.00	
Ground Transportation			\$0.00	
Airport Parking			\$0.00	
Baggage Fee			\$0.00	
TOTAL			\$2,468.58	

* All expenses reflect posted transactions procured

General Office Information

Mailing Address: Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission
235 S Beretania Street, 16th floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

Website: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov>

Submit Testimony: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/submit-testimony/>

Email: hcsoc@hawaii.gov

Social Media: [YouTube](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Instagram](#)

Monthly Meetings

This report will be discussed at the monthly Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission meeting held on February 13, 2025. The next monthly meeting is scheduled to occur on March 13, 2025, at the Leiopapa A. Kamehameha Building, 235 S Beretania St., Room 203, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813 and online via Zoom. More information can be found on the Commission's webpage here: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/information/>.