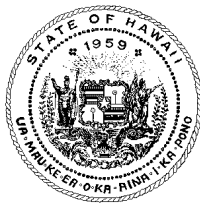


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalū 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 BILL 433, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY.

by
Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

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

Wednesday, March 12, 2025; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & via Videoconference

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

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **supports the intent** of House Bill (HB) 433, House Draft (HD) 1, which seeks to appropriate unspecified amount of funding for fiscal year 2025 – 2026, and fiscal year 2026 – 2027 for reentry services to connect offenders with community-based services.

DCR sincerely appreciates the Legislature's interest in this matter and thanks Chair Della Au Belatti, the House Committee on Public Safety and other Legislators for recommending the passage of this measure. DCR respectfully recommends the Legislature support the \$4 million, included in the Governor's Executive Budget package, to fund its innovative reentry initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **supporting the intent** of HB 433, HD 1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MARK PATTERSON
CHAIR

CHRISTIN M. JOHNSON
OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR

COMMISSIONERS
HON. R. MARK BROWNING (ret.)

HON. RONALD IBARRA (ret.)

MARTHA TORNEY

HON. MICHAEL A. TOWN (ret.)

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NŌ
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
(808) 587-4160

TO: The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair
Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: House Bill 433, House Draft 1, Relating to Public Safety
Hearing: Wednesday, March 12, 2025; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 225

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

The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) **supports** House Bill 433, House Draft 1, Relating to Public Safety, which appropriates funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for reentry services to connect offenders with community-based services.

The transition from incarceration back into society is one of the most challenging yet critical periods for individuals. Without access to comprehensive support during this phase, many face insurmountable barriers to securing employment, stable housing, education, and necessary mental health care. These unmet needs often lead to reoffending, perpetuating a costly and damaging cycle of incarceration that adversely affects individuals, families, and communities alike. Sustained funding for reentry services is essential to breaking this cycle and ensuring lasting change.

The DCR's vision is, "to transform Hawaii's unified correctional system, which has been historically perceived as a punitive model, into a rehabilitative, restorative, and reentry focused system, that reduces recidivism and promotes safer communities." This type of paradigm shift requires significant funding. Additionally, evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that well-funded reentry programs significantly reduce recidivism and enhance community safety. By addressing core needs—such as job training, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and housing assistance—reentry services equip individuals with the tools they need to rebuild their lives and avoid returning to the criminal justice system. Fewer people reoffending translates directly into safer neighborhoods and reduced financial burdens on correctional facilities.

Should you have additional questions, the Oversight Coordinator, Christin Johnson, can be reached at 808-900-2200 or at christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JON N. IKENAGA
PUBLIC DEFENDER

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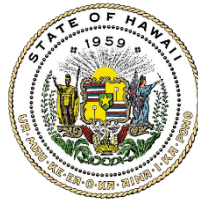
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STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

March 11, 2025

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H.B. No. 433, HD1: RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY

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

The Office of the Public Defender **supports HB 433, HD1**. We strongly support any efforts to expand community-based support services for treatment, counseling, housing, employment, benefits assistance and other reentry programs for all incarcerated individuals. It is a common experience for incarcerated individuals to serve jail or prison time without a meaningful opportunity for self-improvement or options for successful reentry in the community. The limited programs that do exist are often at capacity and do not adequately address the needs of the greater incarcerated population.

The current community correctional centers have almost no programming for incarcerated individuals. For Public Defender clients, it is common for their incarceration to result in the loss of government assistance, housing, and employment. Upon release, the clients are in a worse situation than prior to their incarceration.

To meaningfully decrease the likelihood of recidivism, incarcerated individuals must reintegrate into the community with employment opportunities, life skills and societal support. If released from incarceration without such services and resources, individuals are drawn back to pre-existing circumstances that increase the chances of recidivism. Expansion of available programs and funding to provide community-based reentry services is critical to the success of those who will be released. It also protects the community by decreasing the likelihood that these individuals will recidivate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 433 HD 1
RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 12, 2025

3:00PM

Room 225

Dear Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB433 HD 1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for reentry services to connect offenders with community-based services.

OHA strongly supports policies which reduce harmful psychological, social, cultural, and economic impacts on pa‘ahao, their ‘ohana, and the greater community. Native Hawaiians continue to be disproportionately impacted by Hawai‘i’s criminal justice system, comprising approximately 37% of the state’s correctional facilities, while representing only 21% of the total state population.¹ Ensuring those who have served their sentence have access to community-based support services, benefits determination assistance, employment assistance, temporary clean and sober housing, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, and transitional housing is important to reducing recidivism by enabling these individuals to secure housing, apply for jobs, and travel back to their homes if incarcerated out of state.

OHA appreciates the amendments which changed the appropriation to an unspecified amount, changed the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion, and made technical, nonsubstantive changes for the purposes of style, consistency and clarity. HB 433 HD 1 is a commonsense measure which helps to set individuals leaving prison for success upon their release. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges this committee to **PASS HB 433 HD 1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

¹ “Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities – Final Report of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform to the Hawai‘i Legislature – 2019 Regular Session,” HCR 85 Task Force; Legislative Reference Bureau (December 2018) at p. xiii, https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HCR-85_task_force_final_report.pdf

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Brandon Elefante, Chair

Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Monday, March 10, 2025

Room 225 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

3:00 PM

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 433 HD1 - REENTRY

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

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 3,723 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as of March 3, 2025. We are always mindful that 938 - 49.5% - of Hawai'i's male prison population 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 this opportunity to share our strong support for HB 433 HD1 that appropriates funds to DCR for reentry services to connect those being released with community-based services such as: treatment, housing, transportation, employment, etc. to effectuate a successful transition back to community life.

The only thing missing from this legislation is the requirement that DCR file reports to the legislature (and post reports on their website) to track the number of people being released every six-months and describes the community-based services to which they were connected.

Let's learn from the ID debacle where 10,580 people were released since 2022 and only 150 have received their identification documents. That is 1.6% of the people released since 2022 have received the documents vital for successful community reintegration.

Mahalo nui for hearing this bill and we hope you support successful transition for folks coming home.

¹ DCR Weekly Population Report, March 3, 2025

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2025-03-03-2.pdf>



Committee: Senate Committee Public Safety & Military Affairs
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 3:00 pm
Place: Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of H.B. 433 H.D.1 Relating to Public Safety with amendments**

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

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports H.B. 433 HD1**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for reentry services to connect offenders with community-based services.

Meaningful reentry planning and programming for incarcerated individuals begins on the first day of incarceration and we are pleased to see the legislature taking seriously the need for reentry services.

Recently, the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) published their first report on the current State of Hawaii's reentry program.¹ The report paints an alarming picture of the limited progress DCR has made toward a truly rehabilitative model and fulfilling its statutory obligations under H.R.S. Chapter 353 H Comprehensive Offender System.

Ignoring reentry disregards the challenges people will face when they leave incarceration or supervision, some of these are the same challenges that brought them into those systems in the first place. Formerly incarcerated people need gainful employment, suitable housing, and educational opportunities to build stability and find success after incarceration. In fact, research has found that joblessness is the single most important predictor of recidivism.

While we support appropriations to enhance opportunities for reintegration planning and success, further public funds appropriations to the DCR must include accountability mechanisms, including but not limited to a comprehensive re-entry systems plan, re-entry best practices training for staff, periodic performance benchmarks and annual reporting requirements.

With this in mind, we ask the committee to amend the bill by adding language in Section 2, at line 6:

"Before any funding is released, DCR shall submit a Reentry Plan that includes the names and description of community-based services to which individuals would be connected, the number of individuals anticipated in each cohort, a

¹ Hoe Amau: The current state of reentry in Hawaii; <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Hoe-Amau-Reentry-Report-Final.pdf>

timeline for expending the funds, and an evaluation after each two-year cycle so the Legislature can assess the efficacy of the newly created Reentry System that is shared with the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) and posted on both the HCSOC and Legislative websites. The DCR shall also establish and submit performance benchmarks for compliance with H.R.S. Chapter 343 H on an annual basis to the Legislature and HCSOC in conformity with the HCSOC's inaugural report released on March 7, 2025."

This amendment would advance greater transparency and accountability, and allow for periodic review by both the Legislature and the HCSOC to evaluate the programs selected as part of the broader Reentry System.

Relatedly, ACLU of Hawai'i encourages lawmakers to consider whether it is more cost-effective for DCR to spend the entire appropriation on hiring additional staff, or contracting with non-profit organizations with expertise in providing reintegration support services. The latter would allow service providers to reach into our jails and prisons, provide case management support and ensure a more seamless transition back into the community.

For these reasons, the ACLU of Hawai'i respectfully asks that you move this measure forward with the proposed amendments to **H.B. 433, H.D.1.**

Sincerely,

Carrie Ann Shiota

Carrie Ann Shiota
Policy Director
ACLU of Hawai'i
cshiota@acluhawaii.org

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization founded in 1965 that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 3:00PM
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference**

RE: HB433 HD1 Relating to Public Safety

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

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 433 House Draft 1 (HB433 HD1), which appropriates funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for reentry services to connect offenders with community-based services.

HB433 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Business Services. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Given the critical role of offender reentry services in enhancing public safety and reducing recidivism, sustained annual funding is urgently needed. The legislature emphasizes that connecting transitioning offenders with essential services—such as treatment, housing, transportation, employment assistance, and mental health and substance abuse treatment—is pivotal for successful reintegration into the community. Citing examples like Pima County, Arizona, where effective reentry programs have made a significant impact, the legislature underscores that comprehensive community-based support is vital to breaking the cycle of recidivism.

To meet this pressing need, the bill appropriates funds from the State of Hawaii's general revenues for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027, with the department of corrections and rehabilitation responsible for expending the resources on reentry services. This targeted funding will enhance community connections for offenders, thereby fostering a more resilient and safer society. The Chamber supports this initiative because it directly contributes to reducing recidivism and strengthening public safety by facilitating successful offender reintegration.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 433 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HB433 HD1 Reentry to Community Services for Offenders (Sen.)

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair

Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday Mar 12, 2025 3:00 Room 225

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Strongly Supports HB433 HD1:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment, prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

A comprehensive program that includes diversion to treatment and reentry to community services produces better outcomes and is more cost-effective.

HSAC understands this very well since we treat all these issues for those who have chronic to severe levels as well as new programs for mild to moderate conditions.

- **A chronic condition of substance abuse often has multiple conditions** such as co-occurring mental health issues and physical health conditions.
- There are **various levels of mild to chronic** forms of substance use disorders, mental health disorders and even criminality.

Comprehensive services can address the various levels of mild to moderate to chronic for **multiple reentry issues that can include specialized treatment for substance abuse and/or mental health disorders, harm reduction for lower use of substances, housing, case management, vocational training and employment, education, family integration, harm reduction, restorative practices and more.**

1. **For offenders with heavy use substance use** and either low or high functionality, **abstinent-based treatment is essential for what works according to research** from the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), the definitive body of science for levels of care. The more chronic substance abuse, especially for addiction, would be best to start at residential or if less severe, start at outpatient treatment. Treatments would also address criminality and include medications if needed.

- a. If **residential**, start first and then move to housing.

- i. Key to residential is to **have complex patient capability**.
 - ii. Key is to have **case management** after treatment that focuses on helping offenders “pursue abstinence” knowing that chronic illnesses tend to have relapses.
 - b. If **therapeutic living programs or outpatient**, then start at **housing and include outpatient**.
 - i. Education would be beneficial before, during and after treatment.
 - ii. Vocational training and employment can occur simultaneously with outpatient.
 - iii. Case management and **medication management** are key as part of and following treatment.

- 2. **For offenders with lower substance use** and either low or high functioning, it is **preferable to start with housing plans, case management, education, vocational training and employment with wrap around harm reduction practices**. If substance abuse continues without controlled use and especially if there are other behavioral health issues then counseling, medications, or outpatient treatment can be considered especially as for co-occurring substance misuse along with mental health disorders. Any needed substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder outpatient or counseling treatments would be best to include programming that addresses criminality issues. Medication management would be considered.

- 3. Using **nationally standardized screening and assessment tools** are **essential to develop appropriate reentry plans to determine an integrated approach for reentry**:
 - a. that incorporates residential or outpatient treatment as part of housing or
 - b. if substance abuse treatment is not needed, then integrate recovery-oriented services as part of housing, such as case management or medication management.
 - c. Vocational is key for long-term rehabilitation.
 - d. It is important that parole and probation are involved in every step with service providers.

Telehealth also considered a very cost-effective means for assessments and engagement.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for further questions.



March 10, 2025

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

Re: H.B. 433, H.D. 1 Relating to Public Safety

**Hearing: Wednesday March 12, 2025, 3:00 PM, Room 225 & Via
Videoconference**

Dear Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai, and the Members of the Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs:

Hawaii Women Lawyers is a lawyer's trade organization that aims to improve the lives and careers of women in all aspects of the legal profession, influence the future of the legal profession, and enhance the status of women and promote equal opportunities for all.

Hawaii Women Lawyers submits testimony in **support of H.B. 433, H.D. 1**, which seeks to appropriate funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation ("DCR") for reentry services to connect offenders with community-based services.

Each year, approximately 650,000 individuals on a national basis are released from state and federal prisons. Alarming, two-thirds of released inmates are rearrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within three years, leading to thousands of new crimes annually. This initiative could be pivotal in facilitating the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals into society, thereby enhancing public safety and promoting community well-being.

While this is an "everybody" issue, it is also undoubtedly a women's issue. Many women offenders are mothers, and their incarceration disrupts family structures, impacting children's development and well-being. Additionally, women face significant barriers to employment post-incarceration, often due to limited job skills and societal stigma. Community-based reentry programs that provide parenting support can promote stability and reduce intergenerational cycles of incarceration, and services that offer vocational training and employment assistance empower women economically, reducing reliance on public assistance and contributing positively to the economy. By investing in community-based services, we can enhance public safety and alleviate the financial burden on the criminal justice system and foster safer communities.

For the above reasons, we strongly support H.B. 433, H.D. 1 and respectfully request that the Committee pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

KAWAIILOA

Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i

March 12, 2025

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

Hearing Time: 3:00 PM

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 225

Re: HB433 HD1, Relating to Public Safety

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

On behalf of the Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i hui, we are writing in **strong support of HB433 HD1, relating to public safety**. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for reentry services to connect offenders with community-based services.

Reentry services play a vital role in assisting individuals as they transition from incarceration to society. Studies consistently show that access to housing, employment, healthcare, and education significantly decreases the likelihood of reoffending. Reentry services equip individuals with the tools they need to rebuild their lives and avoid returning to the criminal justice systems.

The cost to house prisoners in Hawai'i is higher than the national average, totaling approximately \$238 per day. To mitigate this cost, Hawai'i sends a portion of its prisoners to mainland facilities, thus depriving them of their families and communities and severing their ties to home. By investing in reentry programs, the State ultimately stands to reduce the overall cost of imprisonment and simultaneously bolsters local communities. Providing structured support reduces the risk of individuals reentering the criminal justice system. Economic benefits help individuals secure employment, leading to greater economic self-sufficiency and reducing dependence on public assistance. Successful integration leads to lower crime rates and a higher quality of life. Reunification of families increases household stability, thereby benefiting children and loved ones affected by incarceration.

Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth homelessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

Please support HB433 HD1.

1099 Alakea Street, Suite 2530 | Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 | (808) 447-1840

LATE

HB-433-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 3:55:51 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Loren Walker	Testifying for Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for your public service.

We urge your support for HB 433 HD1, ensuring the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation provides community-based reentry services for those leaving its custody. Successful reentry is critical to reducing crime and substance abuse.

However, this bill lacks necessary oversight of DCR, which has [historically failed to implement legislatively mandated reentry programs](#). We support the Community Alliance on Prisons' recommendation that funding be contingent on DCR submitting a *Reentry Plan* detailing:

- Community-based services available to individuals
- Expected cohort size
- Fund allocation timeline
- Biannual evaluations for legislative review, shared with the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission and posted online

Despite an annual **\$300 million** budget to incarcerate approximately **4,000** individuals, DCR has failed to ensure even basic reentry essentials—such as identification—for most people released. Stronger accountability measures are needed.

For further information regarding our testimony, please contact Loren Walker at lorenn@hawaiiifriends.org.

Mahalo again for your service.

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HB-433-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 2:40:29 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support HB433 that requires DCR provide crucial reentry services by connecting people with resources such as: treatment, housing, transportation, employment, etc. while providing the money to generate successful transitions for those re-entering the community after incarceration. Please support HB433.

HB-433-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:44:25 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative.