

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
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No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 677
RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION.

by
Tommy Johnson, Director
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

House Committee on Public Safety
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Friday, January 31, 2025; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & via Videoconference

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) supports House Bill (HB) 677, which proposes DCR collaborate with other agencies to inform and assist inmates in obtaining identifying documents as soon as practicable or within established time frames.

As part of the intake process, DCR currently notifies and assists inmates with obtaining a civil ID Card, replacement birth certificate and social security card, if needed. We are currently exploring the possibility of also including assistance with renewal of Hawai'i State driver license prior to expiration while incarcerated.

DCR is currently working with the City and County to secure additional State satellite identification machines to supplement the current machine at Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF). The additional machines will go to some of the other facilities to increase the number of inmates we assist. Additionally, DCR orders birth certificates for inmates, as necessary. DCR also assists them in obtaining social security cards through a Memorandum of Agreement with the Social Security Administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support on HB 677.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MARK PATTERSON
CHAIR

CHRISTIN M. JOHNSON
OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR

COMMISSIONERS
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HON. RONALD IBARRA (ret.)

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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 Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair
House Committee on Public Safety

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair
Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: House Bill 677, Relating to Identification
Hearing: Friday, January 31, 2025; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 411

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) **supports** House Bill 677, Relating to Identification, which will not only affect the timeliness in which people in custody are *informed* of departmental assistance in obtaining applicable identification documents, but also the timeliness in which they *receive assistance* in obtaining their identification documents.

First and foremost, the HCSOC acknowledges the Department's ongoing collaboration with the DMV and the efforts to expand identification processing capabilities at the Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF) and the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). While the DCR has made progress in collaborating with agencies and facilitating access to identification documents, the Commission found that the Department has not fully met the statutory requirements under §353H-32. Significant gaps remain in informing people in custody about available assistance, prioritizing support for those within one year of release, adhering to prescribed timelines, and providing forms in the individual's primary language.

The Commission found that even though legislative funds have been allocated for this purpose, the DCR reported that, of the 10,580 individuals released since 2022, only 150 received identification cards with DCR assistance, and just 32 of these were provided at no cost. A total of approximately \$61,800 was spent on this identification effort, with \$1,280 directly funding identification card issuance and the remaining \$60,000 allocated to infrastructure.

In addressing §353H-32(b), the DCR has made progress through an MOU with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to assist people in custody in obtaining Social Security cards. Despite this progress, further collaboration with federal, state, and county agencies is needed to streamline access to birth certificates and other relevant identification documents. The MOU limits eligibility to those with confirmed release dates within 120 days, excluding individuals with less than six weeks remaining and

parolees who typically receive only two weeks' notice. This approach does not align with the statutory requirement to assist PIC *within the one-year period prior to parole or release*. Again, the HCSOC does not recommend discontinuing the use of the SSA MOU, but rather finding additional ways for expansion. Additionally, DCR does not consistently inform people in custody about the availability of this assistance, leaving a statutory obligation unmet.

Ensuring individuals receive their identification cards upon release from correctional facilities significantly impacts a formerly incarcerated person's ability to reintegrate into society by providing access to basic necessities like housing, employment, and social services, which are often inaccessible without proper identification. This ultimately impacts the overall population by potentially reducing recidivism rates and promoting successful reentry.

This low number of identification cards issued, especially those provided at no cost, suggests the need for a more effective and efficient strategy, as providing identification is essential for successful reentry. This includes starting the identification application process upon admission to custody, allowing sufficient time to gather required documents and ensure successful identification issuance before release.

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.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 677
RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION**

House Committee on Public Safety
Hawai'i State Capitol

January 31, 2025

10:00AM

Room 411

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the House Committee on Public Safety:

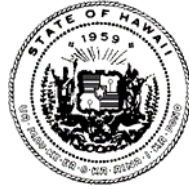
The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB677, requiring the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, in collaboration with various agencies, to assist inmates in obtaining relevant identification such as birth certificates and social security cards. The bill also requires the department to initiate the process of obtaining such identifying documents for inmates prior to release.

OHA strongly supports policies which reduce harmful psychological, social, cultural, and economic impacts on pa‘ahao, their ‘ohana, and the greater Hawaiian 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 receive their identifying documents in a timely manner, meaning before their release, 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.

HB 677 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 677**. 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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

January 30, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Public Safety

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 251 – RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION.**

Hearing: January 31, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the measure, defers to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and provides clarification. DHS clarifies that identification documents such as birth certificates are used to access social services, including Medicaid; however, a government-issued identification *card* is not a current requirement. Additionally, the DHS Med-QUEST Division (MQD) accepts self-attested information from applicants, removing barriers to applying. MQD only requires documents if the attested information does not match available data sources.

PURPOSE: 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

January 30, 2025

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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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

House Committee on Public Safety

Friday, January 31, 2025 10:00 AM Room 411

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF HB 677 RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the committee:

Thank you for hearing this measure and for the opportunity to submit testimony in support.

Waikiki Health is a Federally Qualified Health Center providing primary care as a core service at multiple clinics in Waikiki, McCully/Moiliili, Kaimuki, and by means of mobile medical unit. We also operate our Pu'uhonua Prison Program, a model reentry program, which assists incarcerated men and women in returning to the community and avoiding homelessness and recidivism.

We have discussed the amendments proposed in this measure with our program specialist and support its passage.

Mahalo again for the opportunity to submit testimony.



Alexis Charpentier (MPH), Chief Executive Officer

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Representative Della Belatti, Chair

Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Friday, January 31, 2025

10 AM

Room 016 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 677 - IDENTIFICATION

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto 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 3,697 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on January 20, 2025. We are always mindful that 937 of Hawai'i's imprisoned male population (49%) 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 testify in **support of HB 677** that 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

¹ DCR Weekly Population Report, January 20, 2025

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2025-01-20.pdf>

Citizensunn

forms necessary for the inmate to obtain civil identification cards and other identifying documents to the inmate as soon as practicable.

Hawai'i did pass a law in 2017; here is information from the National Council of State Legislatures.²

"Hawaii | § 353H, HB No 845 (2017). The department will inform inmates that departmental assistance is available to obtain civil identification cards and, upon request, will issue the cards to individuals who have less than one year remaining. Here is information from the National Council of State Legislators."

This bill is important in that it strengthens the law by requiring that the civil identification card must be issued *"as soon as practicable but at least one year before the individual's parole or release date."* It also *"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."*

In this age of technology, identification documents such as id cards, birth certificates, social security cards, etc. are vital to participate fully in life. Reintegration is difficult for people who have been incarcerated for many years. The world looks and operates quite differently now. A civil identification card is not enough with REAL ID being needed to obtain a drivers license, employment, housing, a bank account, etc.

Here is an Overview from NCSL:

21 states have laws aimed at helping previous offenders get identification either at release or immediately following. But these laws vary.

17 states provide permanent identification cards to those being released, while Utah and New York both provide temporary ID cards.

Mississippi, North Carolina, Nevada and Wisconsin explicitly provide for driver's licenses, allowing those who receive them to immediately drive.

9 states – Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Texas and Washington – provide state identification cards, sometimes referred to as civil identification cards, non-driver identification cards or state identification

² **Providing Identification for Those Released From Incarceration**, Updated January 04, 2024.

<https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/providing-identification-for-those-released-from-incarceration>

cards. These allow individuals many privileges in society, but do not include the driving privilege. Most recently, Georgia passed SB 218 (2023) which grants authority for their Department of Corrections and Department of Driver Services, in coordination, to provide a personal identification card to any resident of the state upon completion of their term of incarceration.

3 states – Alabama, Mississippi and Oklahoma that would provide identification for individuals leaving incarceration, **Alabama’s legislation was enacted.** Alabama’s [HB 2 \(2021\)](#) requires the Department of Corrections to provide inmates with a social security card and birth certificate. Additionally, the Department of Corrections is directed to work with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency to assist inmates in receiving a non-driver state identification card.

Mississippi and Oklahoma’s legislation failed to pass but they demonstrate two different approaches to legislation. Mississippi’s [SB 2561 \(2021\)](#) was a targeted approach that would create a six-month provisional driver’s license. [Oklahoma’s HB 2729 \(2021\)](#) would create the Oklahoma Prisoner Reentry Pilot Program which would provide a plethora of reentry services, including assisting reentering inmates with obtaining driver licenses or state identification cards.

West Virginia took yet another approach, creating a program to stay unpaid court costs that effectively allows individuals to apply for identification cards as though they do not owe any costs, so long as they continue to make their repayment plan payments. Unpaid court costs remain a common barrier to identification cards for individuals reentering society.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports providing individuals with proper identification documents as an all-important strategy for successful reentry. To that end, we share a link to a 38-page document from the U.S. Department of Transportation called: **Leading Practices Toolkit Concerning Government-Issued Identification for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals.**³

Community Alliance on Prisons will be working to support this bill so it can cross the finish line! And we hope that the resources we have provided are helpful to policymakers, DCR, and the various agencies involved in identification documents. Collaboration is absolutely necessary to get this right!

³ **Leading Practices Toolkit Concerning Government-Issued Identification for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals**, U.S. Department of Transportation.

<https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2025-01/Leading-Practices-Toolkit-Concerning-Government-Issued-Identification-for-Formerly-Incarcerated-Individuals.pdf>

Mahalo nui for inviting Community Alliance on Prisons and the general public to be part of this discussion!

HB-677

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:40:49 PM

Testimony for PBS on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support.

HB-677

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 3:02:06 PM

Testimony for PBS on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill, strengthening our existing law.